University of Alberta

Achieving Voluntary Termination: The Principal's Perspective

by

Rodney Lee ©

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

Department of Educational Policy Studies

Edmonton, Alberta

Spring 1999

National Library of Canada
Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services
395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
Acquisitions et services bibliographiques
395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-39613-4

Canada

University of Alberta

Library Release Form

Name of Author:	Rodney Lee
Title of Thesis:	**Achieving Voluntary Termination: The Principal's Perspective**
Degree:	Doctor of Education
Year This Degree Granted:	1999

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta Library to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly, or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves all other publication and other rights in association with the copyright in the thesis, and except as hereinbefore provided, neither the thesis nor any substantial portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatever without the author's prior written permission.

Rodney Lee

January 29, 1999

9218 - 63 Avenue
Grande Prairie, Alberta
T8W 1A9

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **Achieving Voluntary Termination: The Principal's Perspective** submitted by Rodney Lee in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

.....
Dr. J. Friis, Supervisor

.....
Dr. J. da Costa

.....
Dr. L. Beauchamp

.....
Dr. K. Ward

.....
Dr. B. Maynes

.....
Dr. T. Gougeon, External Examiner

Date January 28, 1999

Abstract

This study describes, from the perspective of selected school principals, the process they used in counselling/cajoling marginal/ incompetent teachers to resign voluntarily or retire. Interviews with these principals provided a rich description of the process they followed, the background to each case, and the emotional turmoil they experienced throughout the process. Additional information was gathered from central office administrators in the jurisdictions involved and from a review of the judicial summaries of Alberta Board of Reference hearings in which the major reason for dismissal was related to unsatisfactory teaching performance.

The major findings were that (a) the dominant issue for principals throughout the process was the welfare of the students; (b) despite the overriding concern for the welfare of the students, the principals demonstrated a concern for the welfare of the teacher and the educational system; (c) these often conflicting concerns caused the principals to experience intense emotional, professional, and psychological stress during the process of dealing with a marginal/incompetent teacher; (d) the existence of system financial support for early retirement/negotiated resignations greatly increases the chances for success; and (e) there is a significant level of dissatisfaction with the role of the ATA in the process.

Acknowledgements

Many people provided me with encouragement and assistance throughout the process of completing this thesis. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the following people:

My wife, Mary, whose understanding, encouragement, and expressions of confidence provided the incentive to continue and complete this work.

Dr. Fris, who demonstrated extreme patience and understanding in guiding me through this process. His insight and knowledge were invaluable at each stage of the process.

Dr. Maynes and Dr. Ward, whose insights and suggestions were invaluable at the proposal stage, which created a firm foundation for the research undertaken.

I would especially like to thank the principals who agreed to be interviewed. Each and every one was extremely open and candid in his remarks to me. Without their cooperation, this study would not have been possible.

Finally, I would like to thank the following people who have contributed to my development as a person, an academic, and a professional:

My father, John Lee, whose absolute commitment to independent thought and action I struggle to emulate every day.

Bill Milnthorp, Bill Mojelski, Ross MacEachern, and Norm Brown, whose dedication to teaching and commitment to community service I continue to strive to match.

Dr. Kach and Dr. Carney, who demonstrated faith in my abilities and allowed me to pursue my interests in educational philosophy and educational history in their classes.

Merv Kurtz, who supported me throughout my career in teaching and administration. I could not have had a better mentor.

Table of Contents

Chapter		Page
ONE.	ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY	1
	Introduction	1
	The Nature of the Problem	3
	Rationale for the Study	4
	Purpose of the Research	6
	Overview of the Research	6
TWO.	LITERATURE REVIEW	8
	What Is the Nature of Teacher Incompetence?	8
	How Do Principals Ascertain Who Is Incompetent?	10
	What Are the Perceived Causes of Teacher Incompetence?	12
	What Are the Various Ways in Which School Administrators Respond to the Problem of Teacher Incompetence?	15
	What Are the Factors Which Shape Administrators' Responses?	20
THREE.	METHODOLOGY	22
	Introduction	22
	Philosophical Orientation	22
	Method	24
	Selection of Respondents	25
	Data Analysis	26
	Trustworthiness	29
	Limitations	33
	Delimitations	33
	Ethical Considerations	33

Chapter Page

FOUR. FINDINGS....34

Data Categories....34

Coming to Understand the Problem....34

Information From Parents....35

Student Transfers and Dropouts....36

Other Ways....38

Causes for Concern....40

Discipline/Classroom Management....40

Rapport With Students, Colleagues, and Parents....41

Teaching Effectiveness....42

Lesson Planning....43

Student Achievement....44

Grading Practices....44

Teaching Techniques....45

Identifying the Problem....46

Inability of the Teacher to Identify a Personal Role in the Problem....46

Personal Qualities....47

Laziness....47

Ego or Insecurity?....47

Volatility....48

Physical Characteristics....48

Personal and Family Problems....49

Poor Morals and Ethics....50

Responding to the Problem: Initial Steps....50

Formative Supervision....50

Chapter Page

Summative Evaluation 52
Changing Assignment Within the School 53
Factors Which Shaped Administrative Responses 55
Complaints 56
Fear of Damage to the Personal/Professional Reputation of the Principal 56
Relations With Superiors Jeopardized 56
School's Effectiveness Called Into Question .. 56
Sense of Professional Responsibility 57
Concerns Based on Formal and Informal Observations 58
Small School and/or Rural Community Factor 59
Reputation 59
'Reputation' Spreads to Other Communities .. 60
Staff Dissension 61
Causing Problems Between the School and the Community 62
Politicizing the Process 63
Sense of Duty to the Community 63
Confronting the Problem 64
Intrasystem Transfers 65
Inducing Retirement (The Positive Approach) 65
Persistent Revisiting of the Issue 66
Inducing Retirement (The Coercive Approach) 69
Application of Internal Pressure Over Time 69
Application of External Pressure to Leave the System 72

Chapter Page

Dismissal Unrelated to Competency Issues 74

Medical Leave 77

Outside Influences 78

Availability of Alternate Careers 78

Family Considerations and Availability of Full Pension 78

Responses by the Teacher 79

Stonewalling 79

Refusal to Recognize That Change Was Necessary 79

Use of Extended Medical Leave to Delay/ Disrupt Process 79

Defending 80

Appeals to Higher Authorities or Neutral Third Parties 80

Counterarguments 81

Counteroffensives/Aggressive Action 82

Splitting the Opposition 82

Appeals to Professional Principles 82

Capitulating 82

Negotiation and Settlement 83

Effects of the Conflict 85

Effects on the Principal 85

Anguish and Self-Doubt 85

Frustration 86

Anger 86

Guilt 86

Chapter Page

Dissatisfaction With the Role of Central Office 90
Relationship With Their Professional Association .. 92
Satisfaction 92
Dissatisfaction 93
Themes 96
Individual Ethic of Care 99
Concern for Effects on the Teacher 100
Standing in the School and Community 101
Personal and Financial Welfare 101
Concern for Effects on the Students 103
Relationship With the Teacher 103
Impact on Student Learning 105
Serving and Protecting (Altruism) 106
Accretion of Events 108
Concern About Teaching Competence 108
Development of a 'Reputation' 109
The Importance of Being Principled 110
Treating the Individual Fairly 110
Recognizing the Importance of Representation and Due Process 111
Providing the Opportunity for Improvement. 111
The Difficulty of the Principal's Role 113
Frustration 113
With the Process 113
With the Teacher 114
With Central Office 114

Chapter Page

With Their Professional Association 115

Personal Effects 116

Conclusion 117

FIVE. REFLECTIONS ON THE DATA 119

Data Categories 119

Coming to Understand the Problem 119

Causes for Concern 122

Responding to the Problem: Initial Steps 128

Factors Which Shaped Administrative Responses 134

Confronting the Problem 136

Responses by the Teacher 140

Effects of the Conflict 140

Themes 144

Individual Ethic of Care 144

Concern for Students 144

Concern for the Teacher 146

Accretion of Events 147

The Importance of Being Principled 147

The Difficulty of the Principal's Role 148

Conclusions 149

Recommendations/Implications 150

REFERENCES 153

APPENDIX: CURRICULUM VITAE 157

List of Tables

Table		Page
1.	Scientific and Naturalistic Terms Appropriate to the Four Aspects of Trustworthiness	29
2.	The Naturalistic Treatment of Trustworthiness	30
3.	Data Categories and Subcategories	97
4.	Themes and Subthemes	100

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

Phillips (1994) introduced his study of teachers' forced resignations by stating that

> teachers whose performance is unsatisfactory have a detrimental effect on students, parents, other teachers, and administrators. Yet, despite widespread efforts to improve teacher evaluation and supervisory programs, the concern persists. Often, there is little improvement, leaving the termination of the teacher's contract, either through board motion or through a forced resignation, as the only recourse. (p. 1)

Phillips chose to examine the experiences of "teachers whose performance was judged to be unsatisfactory" (p. 1) and examined the issue from several perspectives. This study investigates the experiences of school principals involved in attempting to achieve the resignation/retirement of teachers whose performances they had deemed unsatisfactory.

Introduction

Addressing the issue of teacher incompetence is vital to the health of public education in North America. Bridges (1992) stated that "parents in districts with declining enrollments have begun to question layoff policies that ignore the problem of incompetence" (p. 2). This view was supported by a representative of Alberta trustees' associations who stated that "I think that for some time there has been some concern as to the competency of the teacher in the classroom. The evaluation process is essential . . . to ensure that there is a level of confidence within our school systems" (Alberta Education, 1993, p. 37). Within the current Alberta context of educational restructuring and economic constraints, the interrelated issues of teacher competence and value for money spent on education are public

issues. The resolutions passed at the 1994 Alberta School Boards Association were designed "to push the provincial government to crack down on teachers' rights, contracts, and so-called special privileges" (Laghi, 1994, p. A7). Alberta's Education Minister was quoted as saying that "Alberta's method of grading teachers needs improving" (p. A7). These events and comments are symptomatic of deep public concern about the health of the education system. School administrators must address these public concerns because, as Bridges noted, "poor performers tarnish the vast majority of . . . teachers who are competent and conscientious professionals" (p. 3). To protect the professional reputations of this "vast majority" of teachers and to improve the reputation of the public education system, it is vital that school administrators take action to improve or remove that very small percentage of teachers who are marginal or incompetent.

One need only scan the headlines of a major daily paper to learn that the public education system in Alberta is under attack. The focus of the attack may be international comparisons of student achievement, the most recent results from local or provincial examinations, business and industry concerns about illiterate workers, or parental concerns about individual schools or teachers. Regardless of the focus of the attack, the message that these headlines convey is clear. The public, however broadly or narrowly defined, is not satisfied with the current level of student achievement.

The focus of dissatisfaction ultimately becomes the local school and often specific teachers within the school. Although the dissatisfaction may at times be misdirected and misplaced, there are instances where the teachers identified can be described as incompetent, unprofessional, marginal, or dysfunctional. The commonly held and often-voiced belief that

it is impossible to fire a teacher is incorrect when incompetence or unprofessional conduct has been clearly documented; however, it is certainly true that it is much more challenging when there has been inadequate supervision and documentation. Even more problematic is the issue of the tenured marginal teacher who is not clearly incompetent or unprofessional. The resolution of all these problems is often left to the principal of the school.

The Nature of the Problem

A school principal seeking guidance in handling this type of problem through a review of current research and literature would discover a paucity of relevant material. The ERIC database (1989-March 1998) contains only eight journal articles related to the marginal or incompetent teacher, only five of which were published in the last five years. There are 10 additional ERIC documents and books available from this time span, all but one American in origin. The most comprehensive coverage of the area is provided by the various works of E. M. Bridges, especially *The Incompetent Teacher* (1992). Even this apparently recent resource is based primarily on research conducted by Bridges and Groves prior to publishing *Managing the Incompetent Teacher* in 1984. A search of the Canadian Education Index revealed only six relevant entries, three of which are based on Phillips' dissertation. Alberta school principals do not have access to current context-specific research on managing the incompetent or marginal teacher to guide their professional practice.

Rationale for the Study

If one accepts as givens that public education is under attack, that the focus of the attack is the level of student achievement (although it is not clearly established that there is a problem with achievement levels), that teachers have an influence (albeit only one of many) on student achievement, that there are incompetent and marginal teachers, and that the principal has primary responsibility for ensuring the competency of the professional staff, the urgent need for research directed at informing the professional practice of school principals is evident. Phillips (1994) maintained that "if excellence in education is to be realized, school systems must establish and maintain sound evaluation policies and practices" (p. 8). He contended that "summative evaluation provides the foundation for policy, because important personnel decisions such as . . . termination of contracts affect the quality of teachers employed in a school" (p. 8). Concern for the educational and personal well-being of students provides an even more powerful motivator to pursue research that will improve the professional practice of school principals. Townsend (1987) found that one stated purpose of virtually all teacher-evaluation policies in Alberta was "to maintain and enhance the quality of instruction being provided to students" (p. 5). It is imperative that all educators, especially principals, work to ensure that students experience a positive, compassionate, and intellectually stimulating educational environment that promotes personal growth and academic achievement. The current restructuring of education in Alberta, aimed at increasing site-based management while concurrently reducing central support services, will place an even greater staffing and supervisory burden on the school principal. In addition, Section 15 of the Alberta School Act (1988) and the *Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 9 Handbook* (Alberta

Education, 1994) both clearly identified the principal's responsibility to ensure that students have the opportunity to meet the educational standards set and that their progress be clearly communicated to their parents. It is further expected that the school's success at meeting provincial standards, as measured by achievement/diploma exams, be clearly communicated to the public. This study may provide useful strategies for principals to use when they are faced with dealing with what they perceive to be a marginal or incompetent teacher with tenure.

This study focuses on how school principals deal with tenured marginal or incompetent teachers. Specifically, it focuses on those who, in the judgment of the principal, should no longer remain in the public school system. This study focuses on what principals do to achieve the retirement/ resignation of marginal or incompetent teachers and on the personal and organizational factors that seem to affect their efforts. By focusing on the experiences of school principals involved in achieving the voluntary terminations of marginal or incompetent teachers, this study could provide insight and understanding into the technical competencies, human relations skills, and emotional strengths necessary for school principals to achieve their goals.

The issues of what constitutes a marginal or incompetent teacher and what are appropriate evaluation and supervisory processes will be addressed only to the extent that they impact on the goal of voluntary termination. It is the intent of this study to go beyond mere identification and description to create a framework which principals may use to guide professional practice.

Purpose of the Research

The foci of the study are on the circumstances that motivate school principals to act, the impediments to action, the actions taken by school principals to achieve the voluntary termination of marginal or incompetent teachers, and the emotional impact of these actions on the principal.

The primary research question is then:

What are the experiences of school principals who have sought the voluntary termination of a tenured marginal or incompetent teacher?

Subsidiary questions may include the following:

1. *How do school principals achieve the voluntary termination of the tenured marginal or incompetent teacher?*

2. *From the principal's perspective, are there shared personal and professional characteristics of tenured marginal or incompetent teachers who agree to voluntary termination?*

3. *Are there shared personal and professional characteristics of principals who are successful in achieving voluntary termination? and*

4. *Are there environmental and organizational characteristics that must be present to facilitate the achievement of voluntary termination?*

Overview of the Research

This study consisted of two parts. The first part included a review of the literature on marginal and incompetent teachers and processes used to address the problem, as well as a thorough review of Board of Reference judgments related to unsatisfactory performance. This background was used to shape and inform a series of interviews with school principals who had been involved in trying to gain the voluntary termination of a tenured teacher whom they judged to be marginal or incompetent.

The interviews were unstructured retelling of stories from the personal experiences of seven principals. Questions were asked for the purposes of clarification and expansion of the study. Specific questions about issues suggested by the literature and Board of Reference reviews were asked primarily at the conclusion of the storytelling to reduce the influence of the interviewer on the data. Initial questions suggested by the literature and Board of References dealt with what the perceived problem was and its possible causes; the process used by the principal to identify, attempt to remedy, and finally decide on action regarding the problem; the impact of the process on the principal emotionally and professionally; and impediments to action.

These questions were not meant to be exhaustive or prescriptive, but to provide a guide for gaining a complete understanding of each principal's experience. As the interview processes proceeded, additional questions were raised by the respondents and identified from reviewing the tapes. Where appropriate, these were used in subsequent interviews to expand and enrich the story.

Through this process the study was able to provide insights into the experiences of school principals involved in attempting to achieve the voluntary termination of a tenured marginal or incompetent teacher. These insights may guide and improve the professional practice of school principals involved in this type of situation. Perhaps even more important, they may assist school principals to handle the emotional and professional trauma that often results from involvement in this type of situation.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

> Although incompetent teachers may constitute only 5 percent of the teaching force, they tarnish the reputation of the entire profession, shortchange . . . students . . . , and engender parental dissatisfaction with the public schools. (Bridges, 1992, p. 5)

The existence of incompetent teachers in the teaching force is one of many problems that must be faced by educators if public confidence in the education system is to be restored. According to Bridges (1986), "There is virtually nothing known about the ways in which local school officials are actually dealing with this important problem" (p. 3). This literature review, in examining research findings and writing in the area of teacher incompetence, is guided and organized by the following questions:

1. What is the nature of teacher incompetence?
2. How do administrators ascertain who the incompetent teachers are?
3. What are the perceived causes of teacher incompetence?
4. What are the various ways in which school administrators respond to the problem of teacher incompetence?
5. What are the factors which shape their responses? (Bridges, 1992, p. 4)

What Is the Nature of Teacher Incompetence?

Bridges (1992) understated the problem of defining incompetence when he said that "incompetence is a concept without precise technical meaning" (p. 4). When Brieschke (1986) asked the principals in her study to identify the basis of their evaluation procedures, the responses were summarized as "the guidelines of what is commonly considered to be good

teaching practice and professional behavior" (p. 243). The principals did not elaborate on what exactly was meant by the phrase "good teaching practice and professional behavior." Kelleher (1985) defined the incompetent teacher as one "who has demonstrated his or her inability to meet minimum standards of performance over a number of years" (p. 362). He did not, however, define what he meant by "minimum standards of performance." Fuhr (1990) defined a marginal teacher as "one whose performance borders on incompetence, but who is not incompetent" (p. 3). His definition is of little value in describing the marginal teacher because he failed to define what incompetent means.

Bridges (1992) attempted to bring more precision to the definition of incompetence by looking at the criteria used by administrators in his study to determine incompetence. He found that incompetence appeared to be

> the persistent failure in one or more of . . . failure to maintain discipline, . . . treat students properly, . . . impart subject matter effectively, . . . accept teaching advice from superiors, . . . demonstrate mastery of the subject being taught, and . . . produce the intended or desired results in the classroom. (p. 5)

He indicated that "the most common type of failure is weakness in maintaining discipline" (p. 5), which he identified as "the leading cause for dismissal in studies of teacher failure which have been conducted over the past seventy years" (p. 5). Bridges concluded by saying that "incompetency ordinarily manifests itself in a pattern of recurring instances" (p. 5); "standards which are used to judge a teacher's incompetence appear to vary from one district to another" (p. 6); and "in the absence of clear-cut standards for judging the incompetency of a teacher, comparative judgements inevitably creep into the evaluation process" (p. 6). The absence of 'clear-cut standards' is a problem that exists in Alberta, where "COATS is

trying to develop a list of what one would call indigenous teaching areas, strengths that you would look for in any candidate at any particular time" (Alberta Education, 1993, p. 40).

Bridges (1992) and Kelleher (1985) agreed that incompetence is a series of actions over time. Bridges' comment about the comparative nature of judgements concerning incompetence is echoed by the principals in Brieschke's (1986) study as well as by Fuhr's (1990) definition of marginality as being related to incompetence. Steinmetz (1985) suggested that "whether or not a person's performance is considered satisfactory may be as much a function of the beholder's opinion as it is a function of whether the performance is actually good, marginal, or bad" (p. 1). This finding was supported by Collins (1990), who "demonstrated the powerful influence of the background of the evaluator on what is observed and how it is assessed" (Alberta Education, 1993, p. 6). Bridges' identification of six indicators of incompetence may provide useful categories for the analysis of how the principals in this study came to decide that the teacher in question should be induced to resign. It will also be important to examine whether the teachers involved in the study exhibited the "pattern of recurring instances" identified by Bridges and Kelleher.

How Do Principals Ascertain Who Is Incompetent?

Even if principals are able to decide what constitutes incompetence, how do they ascertain who is incompetent? Townsend (1984) stated that "the most commonly practiced form of teacher evaluation uses supervisors' observations and ratings" (p. 22). Bridges (1992) agreed that the most common means of ascertaining incompetence were supervisory reports. Yet research has consistently shown that administrators do not devote

extensive time to the supervisory function. Peterson (1977-78) found that of the two principals in his study, "neither spent much time in classrooms, less than 5 percent in both instances" (p. 2). He concluded that "the auditing relationships of our two principals were far removed from the technical core of the organization and had little direct effect on the basic instructional goals of the school" (p. 4). Peterson's findings regarding the limited time spent on instruction were paralleled by those of Sproull (1981), who found that "managers attend to instruction for about 4% of the day" (p. 116). Hallinger (1983) further confirmed the finding that supervisors "do not allocate a significant portion of their time to managing instructional activities" (Bridges, 1992, p. 8), whereas the principals in Brieschke's (1986) study bluntly reported that "they did not have the time for direct observation of their staff" (p. 243). Alberta Education (1993) also found that time to conduct evaluations was an issue for principals.

Even when administrators observe teachers, the observed performance may not be representative of the teacher's performance, especially if supervisory observations are announced in advance. Bridges (1992) concluded that the questionable value of supervisory ratings is not limited to education. He cited the work of Latham and Wexley (1981) to conclude that research "on the trustworthiness of supervisory ratings in business and industry indicates that they are frequently loaded with subjectivity and bias and are neither as reliable nor as valid as peer ratings" (p. 9).

Given the questionable validity of supervisory ratings, the use of other detection criteria is advisable. Bridges (1992) found that the most common means of identifying the incompetent teacher were "supervisor ratings; student, parent, and teacher complaints; student surveys; and student test

results" (p. 7). He asserted that, given "the limitations and questionable soundness of some of these methods, the reliance on multiple sources represents a reasonable decision" (p. 7). Bridges noted that supervisors in his study used complaints from students and parents to supplement supervisory ratings. He indicated that "complaints signal that something may be radically wrong . . . [and] also represent a source of pressure on the administrator to deal with the poor performer" (p. 9). Complaints from teachers may also play a significant role in identifying incompetence and in motivating supervisors to act. The responses of the principals in this study will be examined to determine what motivated them to investigate the competence of the teachers in question.

What Are the Perceived Causes of Teacher Incompetence?

The multiple causes of teacher incompetence can be divided into three broad categories involving organizational characteristics, personal characteristics, and other influences both internal and external. Steinmetz (1985), writing in a business context, identified the causes of incompetence as having "three basic natures: managerial and organizational shortcomings, individual and personal shortcomings, and outside influences" (p. 2). His findings were echoed in the research on the causes of teacher incompetence. Bridges (1992) summarized the issue by stating that "the causes of the incompetent teacher's difficulties appear to be multi-faceted" (p. 10).

Organizational and managerial shortcomings are clearly factors which may contribute to employee incompetence. Steinmetz (1985) suggested that lack of a proper motivational environment is a cause for unsatisfactory performance and identified two areas which may have particular applicability

to teachers: lack of promotional opportunity, and the freezing of promotion and income potential as the employee ages. Steinmetz also stated that "the general existence of poor supervisory practices is widespread in industry" (p. 6), and Bridges (1992) noted that "one external cause for the teacher's problems is inadequate supervision" (p. 10). He went on to suggest that the failure of supervisors "to take corrective action early in the teacher's career when this guidance may be beneficial" (p. 11) results from the supervisor's lack of skills. Brieschke (1986) also identified the need for early intervention: "The newly initiated have the capacity, but have not developed the skills or acquired the experience" (p. 238). Steinmetz echoed Bridges' concern about supervisory skills and added lack of specific job training and the failure "to clearly define what is expected of the person in terms of minimum satisfactory performance" (p. 7) as further organizational shortcomings that may cause employee incompetence. The difficulty in establishing a definition of what constitutes teacher incompetence suggests that expected teacher competencies are equally ill-defined and may be a contributing factor in teacher incompetence.

A second major contributing set of factors in employee incompetence may be found in the personal characteristics of the employee. Bridges (1992) identified employee shortcomings as falling into the categories of lack of skills, ability, and effort. The administrators in his study identified ability and skill deficiencies as being "weak intellectual ability, inadequate knowledge of the subject, and poor judgement" (p. 11). Townsend (1984) found that low morale was one factor identified by teachers as a reason for low performance in the classroom. Brieschke (1986) suggested that borderline competent teachers had "insufficient skills, low morale or little commitment" (p. 238), and Fuhr (1990) stated that they do not "grasp the

basic techniques required for effective teaching" (p. 4). Bridges found that "lack of effort was less prevalent than ability or skill as a perceived cause of the teacher's problems in the classroom" (p. 11). Fuhr and Brieschke were less willing to ignore the effort factor. Brieschke bluntly stated that teacher "ineptness, laziness, unpreparedness, or lack of commitment contribute to students' academic demise" (p. 239).

The third possible cause of teacher incompetence are those factors, internal and external, which may cause the teacher to perform below the level at which they are capable. Jevne and Zingle (1991) found that the erosion of teaching skills occurred, at least in part, because of health concerns or stress. They concluded that "regardless of 'who's responsible,' the outcome is the development of a disabling condition which does not allow the teacher to continue to function in the classroom" (p. 22). This view was supported by Bridges (1992), who found that nearly half the teachers in his study "suffered from some type of personal disorder or pathology that adversely affected their performance" (p. 11). He identified emotional distress, burnout, and health problems as falling in this category. Stress, alcoholism, and other substance-abuse problems could well be added to the list. External factors identified by Townsend (1984), Steinmetz (1985), and Bridges included marital, family, and financial difficulties. All of these factors may be intertwined, and a definite cause-effect relationship may be impossible to define. Brieschke (1986) summed up the problem by suggesting that "competency involves a syndrome of variables that are not easily isolated and controlled" (p. 239). The administrators in Bridges' study concurred with this view by attributing "the causes of the teacher's poor performance to two or more sources" (p. 11). This study will examine

principals' perceptions about and awareness of the sources of poor teacher performance.

What Are the Various Ways in Which School Administrators Respond to the Problem of Teacher Incompetence?

Managerial responses to incompetent employees are identified by Stoeberl and Schneiderjans (1981), Kelleher (1985), Steinmetz (1985), Fuhr (1990), and Bridges (1992). All identified techniques that could be used to cope with the incompetent employee in education and business settings. The most thorough and relevant description was provided by Bridges (pp. 13-119), who identified and described the four types of administrative responses to incompetence as being tolerance and protection, salvage attempts, induced exits, and formal dismissal.

Tolerance and protection of the employee appear to be the most common managerial responses to incompetence. Bridges (1992) discussed the use of escape hatches such as "(a) transfer within and between schools, (b) placement in a 'kennel,' and (c) reassignment to non-teaching positions" (p. 31), which sidestep the problem, yet minimize the destructive consequences of ineptitude. Transfers, lateral promotions, and 'working around' the problem employee were identified by Stoeberl and Schneiderjans (1981) and Steinmetz (1985) as methods commonly used by businesses to cope with the incompetent employee. Brieschke's (1986) study found that out of 76 teachers who had reached the stage where a move to formal dismissal was possible, 73 were transferred, and only 1 was dismissed. Bridges (1985) described this as "the dance of the lemons" (p. 21). Bridges (1992, pp. 27-31) identified the use of teacher-observation reports as occasions for ceremonial congratulations, the use of double-talk to mask

criticism, and the provision of inflated performance ratings as other means by which poor performers are tolerated, protected, and even encouraged. The health of public education requires that school administrators respond to incompetent teachers using means other than tolerance and protection.

The second type of managerial response, salvage attempts, was discussed as an alternative to toleration by Bridges and Grove (1984, 1990), Kelleher (1985), Steinmetz (1985), Brieschke (1986), Fuhr (1990), and Bridges (1992). In educational settings the salvage attempt is likely focused around interventions such as peer coaching, collaborative professional development, clinical supervision, or formative evaluation.

Bridges (1992) stated that "the salvage stage represents a period of unmuted criticism, defensive reaction, behavioral specification, limited assistance, restrained support, extensive documentation, and little improvement" (p. 48). His view of the salvage stage is that it occurs when the decision to confront the poor performer has finally been reached after a period of toleration. He correctly pointed out that "these features are influenced in part by the tolerant treatment of the poor performer in the past and the likelihood of having to terminate the teacher in the future" (p. 48). Unmuted criticism represents a retreat from the ceremonial congratulations, double-talk, and inflated ratings of the direct toleration stage; a defensive reaction from the teacher is an expected outcome. Behavioral specifications are at the heart of most salvage attempts and serve to inform the teacher of where improvement is required. This is of vital importance if the administrator expects to be supported by the legal system if it becomes necessary to move to direct termination. The behavioral specifications should include a remediation plan which, according to Bridges, is most likely based on "the lesson planning model of Madeline Hunter" (p. 56). He further

suggested that her model would figure prominently in administrators' "descriptions and evaluations of the incompetent teacher's classroom instruction" (p. 56). In addition to frequent classroom observations and observation conferences, the teacher may be provided with opportunities to visit the classrooms of exceptional teachers, access consultants, and attend workshops. If these processes are to be of value, they must be properly sequenced, reinforced, and tailored to meet the specific needs of the teacher. The provision of restrained support and development of extensive documentation, like behavioral specification and limited assistance, are predicated by the likelihood that there will be little improvement in teaching performance, leading to the necessity of moving to terminate the teacher. Bridges stated that the salvage stage "produces little improvement among the veteran teachers who are identified as at risk" (p. 72). The salvage attempt is seldom successful, but does lay the groundwork for termination.

The third managerial response, induced resignation or early retirement, was identified by Kelleher (1985), Fuhr (1990), and Bridges (1992) as the preferred option when salvage attempts fail. Fuhr suggested that when the effort to assist the teacher has been unsuccessful, it is time for the principal to talk to the teacher and suggest that he/she look at career alternatives. He further suggested that when age is a factor, suggesting early retirement is a viable option. Kelleher concluded that if a school jurisdiction can get an incompetent teacher to contemplate resignation, it should "offer career counselling to help that individual clarify his or her job alternatives. And the school system can offer financial incentives . . . to help the incompetent teacher through the transition period" (p. 364).

Bridges (1992) stated that if the incompetent teacher fails to improve during the salvage stage, the administrator is forced to look for ways to get

rid of the teacher. Given the legal problems involved with the formal dismissal of a tenured teacher, Bridges' preferred method is what he called induced exits. Techniques identified by Bridges to achieve induced exits include the application of pressure, both direct and indirect; negotiations; and offering inducements.

Indirect pressure most often manifests itself in transfers to undesirable teaching assignments; should this fail to elicit a resignation, the danger exists that the incompetent teacher will remain in the classroom. This has the potential to become another form of toleration. Recognizing this danger, the decision to apply direct pressure is more likely to produce the desired outcome. Bridges (1992) suggested that direct pressure can be applied through the power of gentle persuasion, sharing the problem with the teacher and pressing for action, increasing the flow of negative communications, using threats and intimidation, giving unsatisfactory evaluations, and placing the teacher on formal remediation. Each of these techniques brings the problems directly to the attention of the teacher; and the negative communications, unsatisfactory evaluation, and plan of formal remediation all contribute to the documentary groundwork necessary if inducement fails and formal termination proceedings become necessary. The application of intense pressure is intended to force the teacher to a position where he/she is willing to enter into negotiations about the terms of the resignation or early retirement. Bridges, like Kelleher (1985), supported the use of financial inducements and provision of personal and career counselling. Only when attempts to induce resignation or retirement are unsuccessful is the move to formal dismissal recommended.

The final option, formal dismissal proceedings, is clearly viewed as a last resort to be considered only when attempts at salvage and/or induced

resignation has failed. Kelleher (1985) skirted the issue when he discussed the need to induce incompetent teachers to resign, but he was really outlining a four-step evaluation plan that would either result in improvement in teaching performance or provide the evidence necessary for formal dismissal procedures to be successful. Bridges and Groves (1990) found that dismissal is used infrequently, especially with tenured teachers, despite the existence of the legal right to do so. Bridges (1992) suggested that the infrequent use of dismissal is based on "the ambiguities inherent in teacher evaluation, the desires of administrators to avoid conflict and unpleasantness, the staff morale problems which are created unless the teacher is uniformly disliked by colleagues, and the laws governing dismissal" (p. 100). Direct termination, then, is likely to be used only when attempts at salvage and induced exit have failed.

The focus of this study is on how principals induce the marginal or incompetent tenured teacher to resign. This multistep process for dealing with the marginal or incompetent teacher will be used as an analytical framework for examining the responses of the principals in this study.

The literature suggested that there is a range of values involved in this process that moves from a focus on the individual and humanistic to a focus on the welfare of the group and the organization. Associated with this range of values is a range of techniques from collaborative to coercive. If these idiographic and nomothetic concerns emerge from the research, they will provide a further focus for discussion and analysis.

What Are the Factors Which Shape Administrators' Responses?

Motivation to act, or lack thereof, is a major factor in determining administrative responses to the incompetent teacher. Bridges (1992) identified complaints from students, parents, and other teachers as motivators that prompt action. Brieschke's (1986) findings provide evidence to suggest that the absence of complaints will lead to toleration of what she called educational mistakes. She stated that "educational mistakes were committed repeatedly by teachers who got to work on time, kept their students quiet, refrained from asking questions, refrained from criticizing practices (even constructively), and kept their classrooms closed" (p. 248).

There are four powerful factors which serve as motivators to action that mitigate the administrator's reluctance to confront the poor performer. Bridges (1992) identified three factors as "the importance attached to teacher evaluation by the district, the emergence of parental complaints, and the presence of declining enrollments" (p. 34). A fourth factor, one particularly relevant to the current Alberta context, is the existence of financial constraints. Bridges suggested that the financial health and size of the district are related inversely to the district's willingness to confront the incompetent performer. Large, wealthy districts are most likely to be able to indulge in toleration of incompetence through transfer and assignments to nonteaching duties. Small, financially constrained districts will not have the resources to support unnecessary nonteaching positions, nor will they be as able to hide an incompetent teacher through transfer.

In summary, administrators may be motivated to act by complaints from parents, students, and other teachers; financial and enrollment pressures; political and societal demands for educational reform; and moral and ethical considerations concerning the welfare of students. These

motivators to act are counterbalanced by an equally extensive list of motivators for inaction. Administrators may choose not to act because they lack the time and/or skills to engage in proper supervisory practices, they fear the expense of protracted legal proceedings, they see tenure and unions as nearly impossible impediments to action, or they may lack the personal will to act. The interplay of these opposing forces shapes the nature and range of administrative responses to the incompetent teacher. This study will examine what factors motivated principals to act to induce teachers to resign or retire.

The literature on incompetent and marginal teachers examined here provided possible areas of inquiry that guided the researcher through the interview and data-collection phases of the study. The literature also identified preliminary categories and themes that proved useful in data analysis. As the research process unfolded, additional areas for literature review and theory investigation presented themselves.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this study I have described and interpreted the experiences of school principals who have tried to achieve the retirement/resignation of marginal or incompetent teachers. I obtained the data from practicing principals through the use of semistructured interviews and analyzed the data to identify categories and themes. Throughout the data collection, analysis, and synthesis process, I found it necessary to monitor myself constantly to ensure the exclusion of bias based on my personal and professional experience (summarized in Appendix). I believe that I was successful in this attempt and that my findings are an accurate and fair representations of the respondents' experiences.

The study provides data that are not only descriptive of the principals' experiences, but that also lend themselves to the identification of themes that may be used to guide the professional practice of school principals. In intend in this chapter to present the methods and procedures used for the selection of respondents and the collection, analysis, and reporting of the data.

Philosophical Orientation

This study was conducted primarily from a qualitative or naturalistic paradigm using an approach variously described as multisite qualitative research (Herriott & Firestone, 1983), process inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), or collective case study (Stake, 1994). According to Herriott and Firestone, "Multisite qualitative studies address the same research question

in a number of settings using similar data collection and analysis procedures in each setting" (p. 14). Denzin and Lincoln described process inquiry as the examination of "multiple instances of a process as that process is displayed in a variety of different cases" (p. 201). Stake identified collective case study as the study of a "number of cases jointly in order to inquire into the phenomenon, population, or general condition" (p. 237). Each of these descriptions is applicable to this study, and each of these research approaches utilizes methods usually associated with case-study research. All future references to case-study research or case-study approaches should be understood to exist within the context of the multisite qualitative research approach used in this study.

The choice of multisite qualitative research as the primary research method did not preclude the use of methods of data collection and analysis chosen from the quantitative or rationalistic paradigms. Patton (1982) suggested that although these paradigms may be competing, they are not necessarily incompatible; rather, they reflect variations in emphasis. He acknowledged the case built by Guba and Lincoln (1981) that the "paradigms contain incompatible assumptions about the nature of reality, the inquirer/subject relationship, and the nature of truth statements" (p. 189). Patton disagreed with the implications of either/or choice for practical situations: "I believe that the flexible, responsive evaluator can make mind shifts back and forth between paradigms within a single . . . setting" (p. 190). This ability to remain flexible and responsive was of importance throughout the research process and was critical at the analysis stage when rationalist approaches to categorizing data and identifying commonalities were occasionally appropriate.

Method

A multisite qualitative approach to the research was selected as the method which had the best fit with the topic being investigated. Yin (1984) claimed that the case-study approach to research is a strategy which has a distinct advantage when "a 'how' or 'why' question is being asked about a contemporary set of events, over which the investigator has little or no control" (p. 20). Yin's description fit the current research, which sought to investigate how and why school principals seek to achieve the retirement/ resignation of marginal or incompetent teachers. The event being investigated was clearly contemporary in nature and not under the control of the researcher.

I chose the multisite qualitative research approach because I hoped to discover information which could be utilized to inform the professional practice of school principals. Merriam (1988) clearly supported the use of case-study methods to accomplish such a goal: "Research focused on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education" (p. 3). Stake (1978) argued that the case-study method of social inquiry is most appropriate when "we expect an inquiry to be carried out so that certain audiences will benefit . . . [and] to help persons toward further understandings" (p. 5).

The principals selected for this study were asked to provide, from their experience, a story involving the retirement/resignation of a marginal or incompetent teacher with tenure. The initial data were collected through a semistructured interview. Further data collection and verification were achieved through the use of follow-up telephone interviews. Brief interviews

with central office personnel were utilized to provide corroboration and verification.

Selection of Respondents

Respondents for this study were selected using a method variously described as purposeful (Patton, 1980), purposive (Chein, 1981), criterion based (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984), or critical case (Stake, 1994). Goetz and LeCompte drew a clear distinction between sampling and selection when they stated that "sampling is the specialized form of a more general process of focusing and choosing in research that constitutes selection" (p. 64). They further described selection as requiring "that the researcher delineate precisely the relevant population or phenomenon for investigation, using criteria based on theoretical or conceptual considerations, personal curiosity, empirical characteristics, or some other considerations" (p. 64). Based on these understandings, Goetz and LeCompte developed and described 12 criterion-based selection processes, including one described as the

> ideal-typical-or-bellwether-case selection . . . in which the researcher develops a profile of an instance that would be the best, most efficient, most effective, or most desirable of some population and then finds a real-world case that most closely matches the profile. (p. 82)

Chein (1981) declared that a purposive sample is appropriate "if the goal is to obtain ideas, good insights, and experienced critical appraisals" (p. 440) from those directly involved with the situation. Stake (1994) described critical-case sampling as "the selection of examples that are significant for the identification of critical incidents that may be generalized to other situations" (p. 229). Chein and Stake succinctly described the goals

of this study; however, their use of the term *sample* may create some confusion which can be avoided by using the term *selection.*

Principals were selected based on their involvement in the process of attempting to induce a marginal or incompetent teacher with tenure to agree to the voluntary termination of his/her teaching contract. Opportunities presented themselves during the interview process to explore cases where principals were both successful and unsuccessful in their efforts to induce a tenured marginal or incompetent teacher to resign. The exploration of both successful and unsuccessful attempts led to a greater depth of understanding of the process. The principals for the study were identified through discussions with selected school superintendents and professional colleagues. An attempt was made to select principals from a number of jurisdictions. The final respondent pool consisted of seven principals from four different pre-amalgamation jurisdictions. It was hoped that by selecting from a variety of jurisdictions, circumstances unique to a particular jurisdiction would not unduly influence the transferability of the research findings. It was also hoped that the selection of seven principals from four different jurisdictions would allow the possibility of developing recommendations to guide the professional practice of school principals that have wide general applicability. It was further hoped that this respondent-selection process will help to ensure the confidentiality, possibly even the anonymity, of the respondents.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is a continuous and integral process in multisite qualitative research. Goetz and LeCompte (1984) suggested that the integration of data analysis with data collection and the possibility of

preliminary analysis shaping and directing the emerging research design are distinguishing features of qualitative research. Merriam (1988) described this feature by stating that "the process of data collection and analysis is recursive and dynamic" (p. 123). Data analysis can, therefore, be described in terms of when and how.

The question of when data analysis occurs is relatively easy to answer. Data analysis occurs throughout the research process, although the intensity and depth of analysis will increase as the data-collection phase ends.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified four guidelines—exhaustion of resources, saturation of categories, emergency of regularities, and overextension—as indicators of when to end the data-collection and initial-analysis phase of the research. If the study is to move beyond mere description to analysis and interpretation, then a thorough and intensive analysis of the data is necessary. Goetz and LeCompte (1984) believed that researchers who fail to move beyond mere description

> fail to do justice to their data. By leaving readers to draw their own conclusions, researchers risk misinterpretation. Their results also may be trivialized by readers who are unable to make connections implied, but not made explicit, by the researcher. (p. 196)

Goetz and LeCompte (1984) suggested that multiple readings of the data accompanied by a running commentary of observations, questions, and identification of emerging data categories are the beginning of in-depth analysis. This process can be linked to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) idea of unitizing the data or identifying "units of information that will, sooner or later, serve as the basis for defining categories" (p. 344).

For Merriam (1988), defining categories is "largely an intuitive process, but it is also systematic and informed by the study's purpose,

[and] the investigator's orientation and knowledge" (p. 133). Creating categories, identifying themes, or constructing typologies required that I look for repetitions and regularities in the data. Processes that guided me were explicated by Holsti (1969), Guba and Lincoln (1981), and Miles and Huberman (1984).

Holsti (1969) discussed general principles of category construction and concluded that "categories should reflect the purposes of the research, be exhaustive, be mutually exclusive, independent, and be derived from a single classification principle" (p. 95).

Guba and Lincoln (1981, pp. 92-100) discussed problems of convergence and divergence which arise during data analysis. It is possible to view these problems as an hourglass. Data are collected, categorized, and prioritized; and sets are completed—this is convergence. It is then necessary to initiate the process of adding detail, providing perspective, and developing evidence to support judgements. Divergence requires strategies for accomplishing these goals, criteria for inclusion and exclusion of data, and means to bring closure to the process. The hourglass metaphor provides a meaningful framework for the researcher.

In a very detailed and specific look at data analysis, Miles and Huberman (1984, pp. 215-230) discussed 12 specific strategies for drawing meaning from data that "are roughly arranged from the descriptive to the explanatory, and from the concrete to the more conceptual and abstract" (p. 215). Miles and Huberman acknowledged the validity of inverting the process and starting with a conceptual framework whose validity can be tested through the data-collection and analysis process. Regardless of the approach, it was vital that I ensured that appropriate measures were in place to protect the trustworthiness of the research.

Trustworthiness

Guba (1981) stated that "four major concerns relating to trustworthiness have evolved" (p. 79). Table 1 (Guba, p. 80) clearly identifies the four aspects of trustworthiness and equivalent scientific and naturalistic descriptive terms.

Table 1

Scientific and Naturalistic Terms Appropriate to the Four Aspects of Trustworthiness

Aspect	Scientific term	Naturalistic term
Truth value	Internal validity	Credibility
Applicability	External validity Generalizability	Transferability
Consistency	Reliability	Dependability
Neutrality	Objectivity	Confirmability

Guba (1981) used the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to develop a framework for the naturalistic treatment of trustworthiness which guides the researcher through the research process with a goal of producing findings that are plausible, context relevant, stable, and investigator free. Table 2 (Guba, p. 83) identifies the complete process. Reference to Columns 3 and 4 of Table 2 guided me in procedures to follow during the data-collection and analysis phases of the project which helped to ensure the trustworthiness of my findings.

Table 2

The Naturalistic Treatment of Trustworthiness

Inquiry can be affected by:	Which produce effects of:	To take account of which we: During:	To take account of which we: After:	In the hope these actions will lead to:	And produce findings that are:
Factor patternings	Noninterpretability	Use prolonged engagement Use persistent observation Use peer debriefing Do triangulation Collect referential adequacy materials Do member checks	Establish structural corroboration (coherence) Establish referential adequacy Do member checks	Credibility	Plausible
Situational uniquenesses	Noncomparability	Collect thick descriptive data Do theoretical/ purposive sampling	Develop thick description	Transferability	Context-relevant
Instrumental changes	Instability	Use overlap methods Use stepwise replication Leave audit trail	Do dependability audit (process)	Dependability	Stable
Investigator predilections	Bias	Do triangulation Practice reflexivity (audit trail)	Do confirmability audit (product)	Confirmability	Investigator-free

This study met the requirements of trustworthiness through the development of in-depth individual case records based on multiple contacts with each respondent. This addressed the areas of prolonged engagement and persistent observation, as well as provided member checks through respondent review and comments on data transcripts and preliminary analysis. To provide an ongoing check of the accuracy of my analysis and synthesis of the data, I contacted three of the respondents to verify that my analysis and synthesis matched their experience.

The depth of the individual case records provided the "thick description" necessary for transferability. Firestone (1993) claimed that the researcher "must describe a broad range of background features, aspects of the processes studied, and outcomes so the readers have enough information to assess the match between the situation studied and their own" (p. 18).

The use of critical-case selection provided multiple respondents who, according to Miles and Huberman (1984), can each be seen as a case. The use of multiple cases provided the multiple data sources needed to address the issue of triangulation and increased both credibility and confirmability. Triangulation was further strengthened through the use of interviews with central office personnel. Transferability was also increased through the use of critical-case selection.

Throughout the data collection, analysis, and synthesis stages a journal, taped and in print form, was maintained. The journal contained relevant factual information about the respondents, as well as details of each respondent contact. To ensure that the journal was of value in establishing an audit trail, it also contained what Owens (1982) described as "two other key kinds of information: (1) the reasoning and logic that entered

into every decision as the investigation unfolded, and (2) the hunches, guesses, feelings, and perceptions of the investigator as they occurred during the course of the investigation" (p. 13). To enhance this process further, I maintained copies of all drafts containing my comments and those of my supervisor and supervisory committee members, which created an ongoing record of the thought processes and decisions made in the data analysis and synthesis stages. This allowed my supervisor to track the audit trail to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings.

Owens (1982, p. 13) also suggested that raw and summary notes from interviews, records of meetings, documents, guidelines used for content analysis and categorization, and interview guidelines form the remainder of the audit trail. The creation of a thorough and accurate audit trail enhanced both the dependability and the confirmability of the research.

The purpose of this study was to identify experiences of principals that could be used to guide the professional practice of school principals, so it was especially important that the issue of transferability be addressed. Miles and Huberman (1984) suggested that multicase designs such as this can "increase generalizability" (p. 151). Stake (1978) argued that when one wants to generalize from case to case, "the demands for typicality and representativeness yield to needs for assurance that the target case is properly described" (p. 7). This allows readers "to establish the basis for naturalistic generalization" (p. 7). Wilson (1979, pp. 454-456) discussed the concept of generalizability and the context of the reader, suggesting that the decision about the applicability of research be left to the reader. Guba (1981) appeared to concur with Wilson that "the naturalist does not attempt to form generalizations . . . but to form working hypotheses that may be transferred from one context to another depending upon the degree of 'fit'

between the contexts" (p. 81). Firestone (1993) supported Wilson's and Guba's conclusions but cautioned that "case-to-case transfer is enhanced by the description that allows assessment of the applicability of study conclusions to one's own situation" (p. 18). This study will provide school principals with food for thought; how they choose to digest it will be a decision that each individual must make.

Limitations

This study was limited by the need to identify willing respondents who have been successful in inducing a tenured teacher to resign or retire.

Delimitations

The study was delimited by the desire to involve multiple jurisdictions outside Edmonton with two or more principals from each. Distance, travel costs, and the use of interviews as the primary data source further delimited the study.

Ethical Considerations

All activities in this research project conformed with the ethical guidelines of the University of Alberta. Respondents were ensured of confidentiality and were informed of their right to opt out of the research process at any time. It was hoped that selecting principals from multiple jurisdictions would increase the likelihood of anonymity as well as confidentiality.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings gleaned from interviews with seven principals who have worked with one or more teachers who voluntarily terminated their public school teaching careers. The intent of this chapter is to present the stories of these seven administrators in a manner that appropriately and accurately reflects their experiences.

Their stories are told through the exploration of seven data categories that emerged from repeated examination of the tapes and transcripts of the respondents' interviews. The data categories in the order presented are coming to understand the problem, causes for concern, initial responses to the problem, factors which shaped administrative responses, confronting the problem, responses by the teacher, and effects of the conflict.

DATA CATEGORIES

Coming to Understand the Problem

The initial statements made by the respondents tended to be vague, general statements expressing a dawning impression of disquiet about the teacher:

> Ken. *The teacher was working here under, first, special ed., but there were some problems there. It seemed that the teacher wasn't exactly managing the assignment as we had hoped.*
>
> Don. *He became, I suppose, I'm going to use the term* unreasonable.
>
> Tom. . . . *Poor judgement on many occasions.*

Five of the respondents identified the "reputation" of the teacher, as identified by others, as a source of knowledge:

Ernie. *[The concerns] were identified in gossip [that portrayed] him as having a drinking problem and not being entirely rational in his dealings with kids who were problems for him, and the hint that he had not ever made any effort to actually prepare for specific classes.*

Ken 2. *There was this whisper campaign through the community: "What are we going to do with you-know who because the old so and so can't hear, and she's just a miserable old so and so.*

Frank. *He developed a reputation to students as being a teacher that had very, very poor class control.*

Ernie 2. . . . *Somebody who has a reputation of being a poor teacher.*

Don. *There were a number of concerns before I took over.*

James. . . . *A case of generally the community and staff having problems with some of the things that she was doing.*

Ken. *Other people would just say, "He makes it look like he's doing a good job because all these kids get good marks." They sent them to him with what they thought were more realistic marks; then they would have these boosted marks, and anybody who didn't know the situation would wonder, and then the next year the marks fell off again. So I think it bothers people.*

The following statements demonstrate that the reputational factor was identified by the respondents as by far the most significant source of information they used in coming to understand the problem. The reputational factor includes information received directly from the parent community and indirectly from student dropouts and transfers from school or specific classes.

Information From Parents

All of the respondents indicated that information from parents played a major role in alerting them to a possible problem. The following comments are indicative of the information received by the respondents from parents:

Ken. *I was getting significant phone calls from parents who were concerned, and they were also phoning the district. . . . The parent community had decided they'd had enough.*

Frank. *Parents expressed concerns—mostly about his classroom management.*

Ernie 2. *And every year at the beginning of the year I have parents that have had him as their teacher [laughs], and "There's no way that my kid's going to take a course from him," kind of thing.*

Don: *There were numerous occasions where parents would come in and discuss incidents that had happened in the class or incidents that they weren't totally happy with.*

Student Transfers and Dropouts

Students' transferring or dropping out of classes was primarily a concern raised by the high school principals, although in larger elementary or junior high schools with more than one class at each grade level the issue also arose. Don described the process as follows:

> Don. *It got to the point where at the beginning of September in the space of about two days, I had nine different parents come in and ask that their child not be placed in his class. [This] . . . was a very ongoing process, and it had occurred before I took over. The nine that I mentioned stick out because it happened over a period of one or two days right at the beginning of the year. There were also additional ones that had occurred or requests that had been made.*

The more usual instance of this phenomenon was described by Ernie:

> Ernie 2. *Our kids are scheduled automatically by computer, and classes are nicely balanced at the beginning when we start the semester. Two or three days later his class is half the size of the other ones, so we know what's happened. But very little is overtly said by our kids, because we do give them the opportunity to make that kind of change, but you can definitely see there's a move from there. . . . We would have kids who would drop from school and go to neighboring schools rather than take the diploma-exam course from him, and we can't afford that any more. So those kinds of things were evidence that there was something wrong without anybody having to say anything else.*

In one case the source of knowledge that led the principal to come to understand the problem did not involve reputational factors, but rather a series of individual incidents reported to the respondent. Although not reputational in nature, the following statements clearly indicate that the

source of knowledge about possible cause for concern clearly came from parents and students.

> Craig. *Holy, the number of incidents. Other incidents that were reported to me, not necessarily in chronological order, included . . . .*
>
> *There were three students that submitted their hours and received zero percent and contested it with the teacher. The teacher said that the activities that they engaged in did not fall into the criteria that he thought they should have, and so their hours were not going to be counted. There was now an appeal on my desk from the students to be awarded their rightful grade in this particular activity.*
>
> *And at the same time I had another student come in to me—because the report cards had just gone out—to indicate that his mark was incorrect on his report card.*
>
> *. . . None of the incidents that I was involved in or following up on were initiated by myself; they were all initiated by parents, students; and the problems were being brought to my desk, leaving me with no alternative but to examine them.*

The reputational factor in the above case existed but was more subtly handled by parents than in most of the others, as is evidenced by the following statement by Craig:

> Craig. *Oddly enough, we didn't get a lot of concerns expressed by parents. My experience at this particular school is, parents will phone and indicate that they want their son or daughter moved from one teacher to another, but they don't want to ever discuss the issue, they don't ever want to confront it, because they're afraid that their kid may have this particular teacher at some point in time, and it will come back to haunt them. So the kinds of issues we have from parents are simply, "We don't like this teacher; we don't want our son in his class. Can you move him? If you can't move him, we'll drop him from the class." And on a few occasions you can poke and prod and get enough information from a parent to truly understand where they're coming from, but on many occasions they don't want to get into the topic. A lot of times what we'll hear is, "Well, I had another son or daughter in that class, and this teacher was like that when"—whatever "like that" means—and they didn't want their son or daughter to be in that class. So those are the kinds of things we got, but nothing concrete that we could go back to a parent and say, "We would like you to document your concerns so that we can do something with it."*

Once again the pattern at the high school level is clearly evident: Essentially, parents avoid dealing directly with the issue of concern by having their children transfer out of a particular teacher's course section or

drop the class. This pattern occurred in both high schools involved in the study and was practical in these cases because both schools were large enough to have multiple sections, and hence likely multiple teachers, for most courses. The same luxury of avoidance would not exist for parents or administrators in many of the small high schools in Alberta and cannot, therefore, be seen as either a practical or particularly ethical reaction.

The comment by Craig that they received "nothing concrete" upon which they could base action encapsulates the administrative dilemma in this whole area. The ATA vehemently objects to anonymous complaints being used as the basis for even the initiation of an evaluation process, yet we have seen that parental complaints are the basis of much of the administrators' knowledge. Parents' reluctance to go on record with their complaints and concerns has also been clearly documented.

Other Ways

Other ways in which respondents came to understand that there was a problem included issues raised by students, formal and informal observations, and personal concern about student achievement.

> Craig. *The special ed. kids certainly didn't bring it to our attention, because they were not aware, nor did they want to share the story with friends, family, or teachers; but it was other students in the class. . . . By virtue of my concern for what was happening in the class, certainly more time was spent in that class.*

> Ernie. *During his first year here we—myself and one of the vice-principals—made a visitation to his class, as we do with all new teachers.*

> Don. *I contacted the superintendent by letter, a copy to the individual outlining the lack of cooperation. The superintendent wrote a letter back outlining to the individual that he had a legal responsibility to allow me to evaluate him and that he should cooperate. At that point he did, and we did complete the evaluation. As a result of my evaluation, the superintendent asked the deputy superintendent to conduct a further evaluation the following year. . . . A very short*

evaluation was done by the superintendent in the spring of the year following mine, and then he instructed the deputy superintendent the following year to do another full-scale evaluation.

James 2. *There was one case where we had a teacher that had no planning, so I went into the classroom, observed the lesson.*

Craig. *Within the math class generally, we did not have concerns there. He was evaluated a number of times in his math class, and while there might have been occasions where he may not have been as prepared as he could have been, learning was taking place, management was occurring, and learning was going on. Within the gym, once the kids seemed to move into a larger space, he appeared to be much less capable of supervising a large space where kids are moving randomly about. That was partly a result of his own interest in participating as well, though.*

James. *Just sort of some observations that I made in the school, and informal observations. There wasn't anything that I can recall now as what was done as a formal evaluation.*

The two respondents who did not identify reputation as a cause for concern represent schools in the largest urban area involved in the study.

The reputational factor seems to be the dominant "alarm bell" identified by the respondents. Although the poor reputation may have developed as a result of difficulties with one or more of classroom management; rapport with students, colleagues, and parents; teaching effectiveness; and student achievement, these specific areas of concern (identified in greater detail in a subsequent category) appear to fit within one overriding theme related to the teachers' reputations.

As their stories unfolded, occasionally through probing questioning, but more frequently as the respondents relaxed and "fleshed out" their stories, more specific concerns were identified.

Causes for Concern

Classroom management was clearly the dominant subcategory identified within causes for concern. Several other identifiable subcategories were identified, including rapport with students, colleagues, and parents; teaching effectiveness; student achievement; and an inability to recognize that there was a problem.

Discipline/Classroom Management

Discipline or classroom management was a dominant subcategory in the respondents' concerns:

> Ken. *Discipline was not being practiced; it was a fairly wild situation. . . . One minute he'd just fly off the handle, and the next minute you could go in there and the place was just a zoo. . . . One day you'd say, "Gee, look at your classroom. It's going nuts in here. These kids are running the place," then the next day he'd be shrieking at them. . . . So then he'd accuse you of not being able to make up your mind what you wanted. . . . The kids were controlling the place.*
>
> Frank. *He did not have good class control. . . . Standing up in front of a class and commanding respect, he could not do it.*
>
> Don. *The problems that were being created in his class were then being carried over into other classes. . . . If the student would not go into the hallway, he was known to use physical force to remove the student form the classroom. Once the kids were out in the hallway, they were up and down the hallway instead of outside of his door, causing disturbances in all kinds of other classes.*
>
> Tom. *I know the discipline wasn't that great.*
>
> James 2. *The main difficulty would be classroom management.*
>
> Craig. *One boy got cut across the face with a hockey stick, unbeknownst to the particular teacher because he was engaged in activities elsewhere in the rink, and supervision appeared to be lacking.*

Discipline or classroom management was identified as a major cause of concern by each of these six respondents. The one respondent who did not specifically identify concerns in this area did express concern about

confrontations between the teacher and students that may have been symptomatic of management problems.

Rapport With Students, Colleagues, and Parents

Rapport with students or the teacher-student relationship was often discussed by the respondents in close relationship with the classroom-management issue, although cause-effect was not clearly identified. The respondents commented that

> Ken. *She was also really hard on little kids; little kids were kind of frightened of her.*
>
> Ernie. *There was some concern that we had in terms of his not relating to the kids as individuals.*
>
> Ernie 2. *His problem again was one of reputation and a lack of a sense of humor, I would say, in terms of being able to relate well to kids. . . . His problem basically was one of relationship.*
>
> Don. *I believe, because perhaps of his age, [he was] a person who hadn't been able to adapt to the changes in society, to the changes in kids. I think he was very used to having students obey without question, and whenever there was any question of any of his authority, then his response was very reactive and almost punitive that anybody would challenge him.*

Rapport with colleagues and parents was also a concern discussed by the respondents. The three respondents who identified rapport with colleagues and parents as a cause for concern represented the three schools with the smallest staffs, located in the smallest communities in the study. The respondents addressed the issue of rapport as follows:

> Ken. . . . *Poor relationship with colleagues and with the families of these children. . . . When I suggested that I could transfer him back to where he came from, the principal over there was no fool. [laughs] He immediately had no openings [laughs], because his parent community had become upset too.*
>
> Don. *He thought that everything that he did, his rules were correct and that they were reasonable rules and that his enforcement of those rules was reasonable, so much so that he began to alienate*

himself from all staff members. . . . Kids who didn't bring a textbook to class would find themselves out in the hallway, and he thought that that was a reasonable consequence for not bringing a textbook to class. Parents did not feel that way, and neither did the majority of the other staff.

His treatment of other staff was much similar. An incident comes to mind where we had a high school work-experience student within the school working with students. She came down at noon hour and parked in his parking spot; he was out for lunch. When he came back, because somebody was in his parking spot, he simply parked right behind the car, locked the door of his car, walked into the school, went to his classroom; and when this young lady went back to the high school, of course she couldn't get her car out. She mentioned it to another staff member. The staff member she mentioned it to happened to see this individual park his car there, and [his] comment was, "Somebody's taken my spot, and they can stay here until I'm ready to leave tonight." He was not willing to move his car.

James. *Just generally the rapport she had with other people on staff was not good.*

In only one case (Ernie 2) was there an identifiable difference in the relationship between the teacher and colleagues versus the relationship between the teacher and parents. In this particular case the teacher was liked by his colleagues, was seen as a good staff person, and had been at the school for approximately 30 years. His relationship with parents was very negative; however, his colleagues went to great lengths to protect his position. When it was threatened by central office and parent action, in Ernie's words, it had *"the staff on the verge of a major revolt."*

Teaching Effectiveness

Concerns relating to teaching effectiveness were identified by every respondent. These were expressed through comments about concern for teaching effectiveness in general, as well as concerns focused on four specific areas: lesson planning, student achievement, grading practices, and teaching techniques. General concerns about teaching effectiveness included the following:

Don. *The quality—and I suppose what was going on in the classroom would be marginally acceptable in most cases. Certainly not much variety, a lot of seatwork for kids, a lot of boredom, and a demonstrated lack of concern and interest in the students he was working with. But his overall teaching performance was probably marginally acceptable.*

James: *The type of instruction she was offering to students was more geared toward junior high, those kinds of activities, and so consequently there were some problems.*

James 2. *I indicated that the planning was fine, was there now, was starting to come, but then there were other problems, that the program of studies was not being followed. I indicated that it was necessary that some changes be made there, that she become more aware of the curriculum, and that she start following it, and then come back in another month. Well, she was now following the curriculum, had planning in place, but very poor classroom-management skills were evident, and these were evident in the first lessons that I observed. But at the suggestion and advice of the superintendent, I was to indicate one or two specific points and coach the teacher on these specific points rather than just the whole bunch. So it was classroom management, so we sat down with the teacher and we listed some things that she could do to improve classroom management. [These were] written for her, and I again told her I would come back and she would be visited, and we would look at classroom management again. And the classroom management had improved, but, again, there were no lesson plans for this.*

In addition to the general concerns about teaching effectiveness, concern was expressed specifically about lesson planning, student achievement, grading practices, and teaching techniques. One or more of these areas of concern were mentioned by most respondents, although they tended to identify these as less important than the other issues raised.

Lesson Planning

Ken. *It was just a nightmare, I mean, trying to get lesson plans out of him, his year plans. He would just kind of duplicate the Program of Studies and sign it, . . . and you couldn't convince him that that wasn't adequate. If the government said that's what he should do, that represented a year plan for him. And it was just an immovable force: He was not going to change.*

Ernie. *The hint [was made] that he had not ever made any effort to actually prepare for specific classes, but rather, he'd teach generically, because he's a math teacher, and his lessons were the same from year to year and pretty much canned.*

James 2. *There was no planning, no lesson plan being followed, so I then wrote a report and indicated to her that I would be back in two weeks or three weeks . . . and told her that I would like to see evidence of some planning. Well, I did come back, and there was evidence of planning, but there were other difficulties then. The difficulty then was that basically what she was doing was showing videos with sixteen-millimeter projectors in a health lesson that had nothing to do with what she was supposed to be doing in the curriculum.*

Student Achievement

Ken. *The parents felt the kids weren't learning anything.*

Ken 2. *Teaching Grade 2, so the reading was almost a joke because she didn't always hear what they were saying, so if they even got close to the word it was good enough. And I knew one little kid—I'll never forget the story—he always said, "All I say is 'Skip it.' If I come to a word I don't know I say 'Skip it.' She sees my mouth move . . ." [laughs], and stuff like this.*

Ernie. *There would be lots of kids who would the next year take a math class from somebody else and use as their excuse they'd had this guy for a previous math class, and so they didn't learn anything. His marks were always comparable to other people's, so it wasn't obvious in terms of a great number of failures or anything like that. But, on the other hand, there were great numbers of dropouts, so some of those of course would have been failures if they'd stuck to it.*

Grading Practices

Ken. *He probably never gave a mark under eighty.*

Craig. *And at the same time I had another student come in to me—because the report cards had just gone out—to indicate that his mark was incorrect on his report card. When the teacher was informed by the vice-principal that the students' appeals were going to be upheld, he then appealed back, and now the appeal was on my desk. I met with the teacher and called for his entire marking of the entire course and the weighting factors, and the first thing I dealt with was simply marks calculations of the kids' report-card marks. Approximately eighty percent of those marks could not be replicated to be what they*

were on the kids' report cards. . . . I opened up his math marks and other phys. ed. marks and found approximately seventy percent of his report-card marks could not be replicated as he had reported them on the report card, and that a new calculation would have to be done. . . . Following that it became apparent that his marking was all out of whack. It became apparent that his assessment of grades for the particular activity that was being called to question in the first place was kind of a pie-in-the-sky, little criteria attached to it, simply assigning of the grade based on the student's attitude in class.

Don. *I know that he had a meeting with the former principal and with the former associate or deputy superintendent about consistently low marks in his courses and extremely hard grading practices.*

Teaching Techniques

Ken. *He wouldn't work on anything involving teaching practice; he thought he was doing just fine. . . . He simply felt that, regardless of testing done by the psychologists and what the teachers wanted and what the parents wanted, he was going to do what he thought this kid needed. . . . His whole idea was, "I'm coming in here, and I'm doing it the way I'm doing it, and I don't care who you or anybody else is."*

Craig. *What I found out from spending time in the class was that the teacher's particular interest in the class perhaps was not so much teaching phys. ed. as being an active participant himself.*

Tom. *Discussing things that weren't appropriate for young children to be discussing: maybe involved as a young person with drugs; talking about current events that were beyond what young people should be talking about, whether they had sexual overtones or drug overtones, violence, those types of things. . . . Sometimes you end up with a teacher who is young and has a lot of reasons to want to make everything right. They want to lay bare their soul, so to speak. They have this conviction that if they are up front with their students about their entire life, then this makes them a better teacher and puts them probably on a level playing field, so to speak.*

Other issues raised included the physical state of the classroom,

Ken. *His classroom was a mess physically, just a mess, like a pile, just like the local landfill.*

and the teacher's inability to recognize or accept that there was a problem:

> Ken. *We were the ones with the problem; he was fine. And it was one of those things. We couldn't get him to read between the lines. You know what I'm trying to say. It was just pendulums all over the place.*

Concerns about teaching effectiveness varied but tended to center on one or more of lesson planning, student achievement, grading practices, and teaching techniques. Interestingly, these areas of concern, which tend to be the areas of focus for most remediation plans devised for teachers in difficulty, did not appear to be the major concern of the respondents. Because the respondents identified these as less important than other areas of concern, it seems to call into question the validity, at least in these cases, of many of the theories and recommended approaches to supervisory action currently in use. This apparent contradiction will be addressed in the conclusion/recommendation chapters.

Identifying the Problem

The respondents also indicated that they were starting to understand/identify reasons for the teachers' perceived incompetent or marginal performance. An inability on the teacher's part to recognize that his/her actions were part of the problem, and therefore that change on his/her part was needed to solve the problem, was identified by a number of the respondents. Physical, emotional, attitudinal, and personal problems were also identified as contributing factors.

Inability of the Teacher to Identify a Personal Role in the Problem

> Ken. *He* couldn't *recognize the simple things sometimes we wanted to have done. . . . He would not grant that things could be done differently.*
>
> Ernie. *An attitude of noncooperation when there was a problem.*

> Don. *This person seemed to develop a position that he could do no wrong and that what he was doing was in fact acceptable and other people accepted it.*

Personal Qualities

The respondents identified personal qualities including laziness, ego, volatility, physical characteristics, and personal and family problems as factors that contributed to the teachers' unacceptable performance.

Laziness. Ken, in discussing his first case, clearly indicated a belief that part of the problem was laziness: *"Basically it was obvious he wanted to do the same for everybody—which certainly makes that job [special education] easy."* This contention that laziness was part of the problem seems to be supported by the previous citation related to this teacher, where it was clearly indicated that he believed that duplicating the Program of Studies constituted an adequate yearly plan.

Ego or insecurity? In discussing the same teacher, Ken appeared to raise another issue: *"His whole idea was, 'I'm coming in here, and I'm doing it the way I'm doing it, and I don't care who you or anybody else is."* This clearly indicated a problem, but what was unclear was the real reason for the teacher's expressing this attitude. Was it the result of an absolute conviction that he was right (ego), a defensive reaction based on a feeling of insecurity, or a further example of laziness?

Craig also dealt with a situation where the motivation for the teacher's behavior was unclear. Did this teacher show off because of ego, did he have a need to demonstrate his superiority because of insecurity, or was he self-serving rather than service oriented?

> Craig. *The circumstances that arose would include kids sitting on the sidelines while the teacher played badminton with the best athletes; volleyball games, the teacher would play one man against six to show*

how athletic and what a skilled athlete he might have been. At the same time kids were sitting on the bleachers waiting for an opportunity to participate. If they were playing a basketball game, he was a key player in one of the teams, and they played and played and played while other students sat on the benches waiting for their turn to play. I documented my concerns relative to, as a participant he has trouble supervising, as a teacher the kids' involvement in the activities superseded his, and the need for him to cease and desist from active participation in classes so that he could supervise a class, instruct a class, and give kids the opportunity to participate.

. . . Now we're starting to talk about moral and ethical issues as a teacher and a coach.

Volatility. Concern about the teachers' volatility was expressed by several respondents, with these comments by Ken and Ernie best capturing the tone of the concern:

Ken 2. *She also became a little intemperate toward the end. She would shake people a bit.*

Ernie. *He had to blow up frequently.*

Physical characteristics. Four of the respondents reported that the physical characteristics and/or physical health of the individual played a role in the problem. Ken and Frank both supported the idea that physical characteristics were important:

Ken 2. *When I first arrived she only had one hearing aid; toward the end she had two, so her hearing was a definite problem, absolutely. Even with two hearing aids it was always, "Beg your pardon? Pardon me?" . . . The bottom line was, she couldn't hear. I mean, there's no two ways about it: She couldn't hear.*

Frank. *He was a small man in stature physically, and the kids would tend to—especially the Grade 9 boys and that—would challenge him, not openly, but they were making fun of him behind his back. . . . He had a very kind of squeaky, tiny voice, and he just couldn't project his voice strong enough, and the kids just purposely ignored him when he talked. This just caused all the discipline problems that go along with it.*

Craig acknowledged a physical condition identified by the teacher:

Craig. *He further expounded on the fact that he was diabetic and that he needed that physical activity to keep his insulin level intact and so forth, and so it was a medical reason for participating, or a medical necessity perhaps.*

However, it was clear from the overall context of the interview that he felt that this condition was raised more to justify the teacher's actions than out of medical necessity. Don clearly rejected the medical connection: *"I really don't think that his medical condition was a cause of anything that was going on in his classroom."*

Personal and family problems. Three respondents indicated that the teachers were experiencing personal or family problems. Frank appears to have indicated a clear belief that these problems might have contributed to the teacher's difficulty performing at work:

> Frank. *I believe there were certainly signs, looking back, that indicated that he was under an enormous amount of stress, because he started regularly forgetting to show up for his noon-hour supervision or any activities we had planned and so on, so there were all kinds of signs that he was becoming forgetful; whether it was on purpose or not I'm not sure. And he was one of the arrive-early-and leave-late teachers for a number of years, and then he got very, very good at arriving late and leaving early, so I think all those signs indicated that the stress was getting to him.*
>
> *Now, in terms of actual physical health problems, the only one that I can recall is that he had several bouts of kidney stones, and in discussions with him he thought maybe they were related to the stress of the job.*
>
> *. . . He had the experience of having three model children and then one child . . . that needed full-time guidance counselling every minute of the day and caused all kinds of discipline problems. He was suspended a number of times; he was expelled once; he ran away from home; he was in trouble with the law; he was everything that his other children weren't. And so, yes, he had all that on top of everything else, and I'm sure that that kept him under a lot of stress.*

Ernie suspected that his teacher *"had a drinking problem"* which might be the underlying factor which would explain the teacher's demonstrated volatility, lack of adequate planning, and negative reputation in the community. Although Ken acknowledged the existence of problems, he clearly rejected these as the basis for the teacher's inadequate performance:

> Ken. *Illness? No, not with him. . . . Toward the end there were some problems with his family. There was a death of a very good friend down east, and I think a sibling, and then his father. But those problems with his teaching were there long before any of that.*

Poor Morals and Ethics

(This area applies to only one case and has been severely edited to protect the identity of the respondent and the teacher.)

> Craig. *Any of the ethical issues we discussed, whether it was the [unethical practices] or making side deals with students or whatever, his practices within his own organization, raising funds and how they were being expended, he never admitted to wanting to examine those as if there were some ethical concerns. There weren't in his mind; there was nothing unethical about anything he did.*

Although this particular instance could certainly have been included in one or more of the previous subcategories, the specifics of this case are so powerful that I feel that it warrants standing alone.

Responding to the Problem: Initial Steps

The third category that emerged was the variety of administrative responses to the perceived problems. Responses to the perceived problem included initiating formal formative and summative supervision, building on the evidence file through audits and records, and changing assignments within the school.

Formative Supervision

Most respondents initiated a formative supervision process once the perceived problem came to their attention. The initial recognition that there might be a problem was not the result of formal evaluation in any of the cases described by the respondents. The use of "information at hand" to

support the initiation of a supervision process is demonstrated by the following:

> Don. *I indicated to this individual that he was on my evaluation list for this year and that I should make arrangements fairly quickly to come in and do some evaluation.*
>
> James 2. *It meant a number of visits throughout the year.*
>
> Craig. *My initial reaction was to simply meet with the teacher, and I did, to express my concern.*
>
> Ernie. *Being the school administrators, we were assigned the task to sort of monitor to see how he had done with the improvement, and he made some efforts to change his approach to kids and seemed to be concerned about what his image was in the community. . . . We did for the year after that, and on a regular basis, I think, at least four visits from me and a like number from one of the assistant principals.*

But Ernie acknowledged the failure of the formative evaluation process to bring about the desired changes: *"We weren't seeing anything different."*

> Administrative actions to correct problems ranged from coaching:
>
> James 2. *You do try to first of all initiate change or make improvements and work with the teacher, coach the teacher to try and get them at the level that you think would be satisfactory.*

to making detailed and specific recommendations supported by periodic supervision:

> Craig. *Again meeting with the teacher and the department head, we reviewed the situation surrounding the incident/accident, and we set some governing practices in place in terms of how we wanted this particular teacher to be supervising his class. Both the department head and myself were involved in periodic informal drop-ins to see that the supervision was appropriate.*
>
> *Again, I met with the department head and with the teacher involved. . . . We set out a fairly extensive list of expectations as to what he could and couldn't do as the teacher, what he could and couldn't participate in, and how he should and should not participate.*

> to constant monitoring:

> Tom. *On two or three occasions I had talked to this person about the types of things that he would be discussing in the classroom. . . . It got to the point where I had to see his lesson plans on a daily basis; then I got it on a weekly basis, and the vice-principal and I looked at these plans so that we could see what was going on.*

In one extreme case the principal arbitrarily adjusted student marks after the teacher failed to respond to supervisory suggestions:

> Ken. *One year I even took his marks, took a pen, and cut them twenty percent. He was wild. . . . I had been mentioning to him all year, "Don't do that, change this, back them up," and we would talk about curving them and anything, or marking differently, whatever. . . . One year I just did [makes slashing sound], slashed all his marks, which the principal has a right to do, and then, if the teacher doesn't object . . . . I don't think [the parents] took it any further, and I knew he wasn't going to take it any further, so that told me too how committed he was to those marks [laughs].*

The respondents recognized that in some cases formative supervision was doomed to failure because even when the teacher was interested in and willing to attempt change, it would not be successful because the real issue had less to do with teaching technique than with relationships with students:

> Ernie. *I think in the first year that we were concentrating on his professional improvement, there seemed to be some desire on his part to do that, but whatever he was doing really wasn't having any effect on him in terms of his relationship with kids, which was the thing that was the biggest concern. So he was doing some better work in terms of planning lessons.*

Summative Evaluation

Once the problem had become clearly intractable, the respondents began to build an evidence file which often included a review of past performance at the school or in the system. Through discussions with central office personnel and the former principal, Ken found that *"prior to coming to this school there had been problems as well, and nothing*

changed, nothing got better, nothing was going to change, nothing was going to get better."

The realization that *"nothing was going to get better"* led Ken to start creating an evidence file based on the documentation arising from the supervision process:

> Ken. *But I just decided something's going down on paper one way or the other. . . . Finally when I wrote a report, which was moderate, but I had some recommendations, he was offended by the recommendations. . . . We went through what my concerns were. . . . Again, nothing came out of it, so again we had the district involved with the person who was responsible, the associate superintendent, who wrote him a rather stern letter.*

Craig used input from students to begin his file:

> Craig. *I asked for a written report from the students and received one, and as a result of that report, I wrote up a rather scathing report myself to the Superintendent of Schools asking for intervention from central office.*

In both these cases the respondent sought assistance from central office personnel which, as we will see later, they found to be less than satisfactory.

Changing Assignment Within the School

The respondents identified teaching-assignment changes within the school as one alternative that was used to address the problem:

> Ken. *The first report I wrote for him wasn't horrible, but it did say that I felt he wasn't making the transition to an elementary setting—because this was a full elementary setting—adequately, and that special ed. wasn't an adequate assignment; and then made some recommendations, one being that he not teach special ed., which then he thought, well, he could live with that. . . . So after some discussion and with some assistance from central office personnel, we then changed his assignment.*

> Ernie 2. *The staff in the science department where he worked came to me and offered to readjust classes and so on so that the pressure was off him, so we did that for a semester. . . . We put him into a*

> *situation where he actually had acted as a roving instructor in the science department for a semester; he had no actual class assignments. He would act as an assistant to the other people: prepare their labs, become the expert visitor on various topics, particularly in his field, and handle things that way; do some of the test-development work and so on for the new science courses that were just at the verge of being introduced then.*

> Frank. *We went through every hoop we could think of. We said, "He certainly can't have the Grade 9s"; he was no better with the Grade 8s; he was marginally better with the Grade 7s. It wasn't very long before we had him teaching nothing but 7s, and we almost timetabled him right out of existence. It didn't seem to matter where we put him in the system, he just couldn't handle the discipline.*

When Frank found that changing teaching assignments did not successfully address the basic problem, which was one of classroom management, the particular talents and expertise of the teacher allowed Frank to try yet another change in assignment:

> Frank. *[He was introduced' into the counselling field, probably for all the wrong reasons. Even though he was trained as a guidance counsellor, he just did not have a good rapport with the kids, but it did take him out of the classroom; . . . I repeat, it did take him out of the room.*

The problem had been clearly identified by Frank as a lack of classroom-management skills, and the move into guidance counselling removed the teacher from being in charge of a classroom for at least part of the time. Although the move to part-time guidance counselling was an internal change in job assignment, it could also be viewed as an example of avoidance.

These respondents used changes of teaching assignments within the school as a possible solution, in each case unsuccessfully, and also suggested that the internal transfer was a way of trying to avoid dealing directly with the problem. Ken and Craig clearly identified situations where avoidance of the issue was used by central administration or previous

principals. In each case the respondent subsequently had to address the issue and take action.

> Ken. *I don't think anybody had ever documented everything; they'd dance around and thought, This guy's got a problem. And the principal sort of talked to him or mentioned something, but nothing ever happened.*
>
> Craig. *As I find out later, he had been transferred from location to location until he ended up at this particular school.*

It is evident from these comments that avoidance of the issue through adjustments to teaching assignment or transfers did not solve the problem but merely shifted the responsibility for dealing with the problem to another administrator. The issue of avoidance will be one theme explored in the discussion chapter.

Factors Which Shaped Administrative Responses

When trying to deal with the perceived problem, the respondents were often confronted with an absence of documentation about previous teaching practice and competency. These problems were best described by Ken:

> Ken. *The problem was there, and it existed, unfortunately, prior to me deciding something had to happen. I don't think anybody had ever documented everything; they'd danced around and thought, Well, the guy's got a problem. And the principal sort of talked to him or mentioned something, but nothing ever happened.*

The factors which shaped administrative responses to the perceived incompetent or marginal performance were varied. The dominant factor was the existence of complaints from parents, but complaints from students, concerns that the respondent had either through formal or informal observation, and the realization that if anything was going to happen, they would have to initiate the action were also significant.

Complaints

The following comments demonstrate the key role played by complaints and student actions in shaping administrative responses. Complaints and actions could be further categorized as those that damaged the personal/professional reputation of the principal, jeopardized the relationship of the principal with his superiors, called into question the effectiveness of the school, or required the principal to act as a matter of professional responsibility.

Fear of Damage to the Personal/Professional Reputation of the Principal

> Ken. *I probably could have put up with it longer, but I started to have more and more parents call me. . . . There were a number of parents who were phoning me at home and here, phoning the district, and then they began to say, "Well, what's the matter with you? Can't you do anything? You're in charge. Are you just part of the problem instead of part of the solution too?" And I figured I'd better just—*
>
> Craig. *That issue came to my attention through the parent, who was very, very annoyed and had written a letter to the school board indicating their concern and so forth.*

Relations With Superiors Jeopardized

> Ernie. *We began to get parental complaints, parents phoning and asking that their students not be in his classes and that kind of thing. And I gather at the same time the same sorts of complaints were going to the central office.*

School's Effectiveness Called Into Question

> Tom. *On one occasion I received—probably on a couple of occasions, as a matter of fact—I received some complaints from parents, some written, some verbal. I had had complaints from the parents that felt there wasn't very much going on in the classroom. . . . And so that was also another concern that parents had.*
>
> James 1. *Parents weren't happy with what was happening in the class, and also rapport with staff was not very good.*

> Ernie. *We had a concern because we'd register the kids in his classes, and by the time two or three months had passed in a semester, there would be a real significant number who would want out of his classes.*
>
> Ernie 2. *If he's to do a diploma-exam course, the kids won't take it.*

Sense of Professional Responsibility

> Craig. *None of the incidences that I was involved in or following up on were initiated by myself; they were all initiated by parents, students; and the problems were being brought to my desk, leaving me with no alternative but to examine them.*
>
> Craig. *I had a student report an incident to my office. . . . Later on in the same year it was brought to my attention by students that an unusual practice called shark baiting was going on in their class.*
>
> Ken. *I could see that he probably wasn't just going to go away. He was not going to change. I felt the district [was] not prepared to take this on; they just thought, Well, maybe he'll get better; maybe he'll change. But I just decided something's going down on paper one way or the other.*

The move from concern to a decision to act appears to have been influenced by two main factors: a belief that the teacher was unable or unwilling to change and a belief that if anything was going to happen, it was up to the respondent to make it happen. The preceding comment illustrates these related beliefs.

Complaints from students, or perhaps more accurately, student actions, were significant at the high school level, as evidenced by the comments of high school principals Ernie and Craig.

We have previously seen that complaints from parents and, to a lesser degree, students, were a major source of the respondents' knowledge about the existence of a problem. These complaints also were the most significant factor in shaping the response of the administrator to the problem. The respondents felt compelled to act on complaints received from the parent and student community. It appears that parent and student

complaints validated or focused existing concern on the part of the respondent.

These statements are representative of the comments made by each respondent regarding each case. Because every respondent identified complaints from parents and students as having a role in their decision to act, and because complaints are a major impetus to act, it seems that developing an acceptable method of dealing with complaints and giving them a formalized place in the process would be advisable, but is it possible?

Concerns Based on Formal and Informal Observations

We have previously seen that formal and informal observation, along with concerns about student achievement and concerns raised by nonadministrative personnel, formed part of the basis for ascertaining that there was a problem. One example of this accumulation of data was described by Frank:

> Frank. *It is accumulation, but the thing that got me off my duff ultimately was when I asked him to give me some sort of weekly or biweekly report on the numbers of students that he was seeing. . . . He got very defensive about having to report the numbers of kids he was seeing and so on. He saw that as an intrusion into the whole counselling field and the confidentiality and so on and so on, but I was adamant about that, and I had to ask him a number of times. I got into a heated exchange over it, but eventually he did start to give me the things I was asking for, and certainly he wouldn't lie—that just wasn't his nature. It didn't take me very long to realize that he wasn't seeing near the number of students that I know that he should have been seeing.*

Although these other sources of information were important, it is clear that the impetus to action came primarily from parent complaints, which in many cases served to focus the existing concerns of the respondents.

Small School and/or Rural Community Factor

The process of inducing/counselling teachers to resign/retire was complicated for a number of the respondents by the nature of the community and the school. This small school and/or rural community factor impacted upon the process in a number of ways, including the development in the community of a "reputation," positive or negative, for the teacher; the spread of the reputation to other communities, making transfers difficult; creating staff dissension when the teacher was seen as not carrying his/her share of the load or being treated unfairly by administration; causing problems between the school and the community; politicizing the process; or creating pressure on the principal to act because of his/her constant contact with the community. These factors were both impetuses and impediments to action.

Reputation

In two cases the respondents were dealing with a teacher who was teaching the second generation in the same community, and as a result there was a well-entrenched negative reputation, as evidenced by Ken's and Ernie's comments:

> Ken 2. *Her kids had all gone through the system; she was now teaching her grandchildren and other people's grandchildren. Obviously, anybody who was long associated out here knows that there was a problem. The community had had their time with her, I think, too.*

> Ernie 2. *The kids won't take it. He's been here so long that the kids we have are kids of kids he had previously, so it makes it difficult to handle. . . . His answer to everything was, "Well, the kid has to work harder. There's no other answer." After a couple of generation of that [laughs], some people knew that there were other answers possible. . . . It's not a secret that his reputation is not that great in the community.*

Frank, on the other hand, was faced with dealing with a longtime staff member who was well respected and liked in the community for many reasons unrelated to his teaching ability or lack thereof:

> Frank. *It was difficult because he was well liked in the community, he had a good network—all the things that give a principal heart palpitations when you talk about letting somebody go. . . . So I'm painting a picture of a teacher that is popular with the community, well trained, quite "with it."*

Ernie was dealing with a teacher transferred to his staff from a school in a nearby community where the teacher had acquired an undesirable reputation:

> Ernie. *That [alcohol abuse] was the reason he was moved from the other school, because of the fact it had got to the point where it was obvious in the community, because that was the community he lived in and continued to live in. He never moved into—*

The closeness of the communities facilitated the spread of his reputation to the community in which his new school was located.

<u>'Reputation' Spreads to Other Communities</u>

The spread of a negative reputation to neighboring communities had two consequences. In Ernie's case the *"rumors still came back that that [alcohol abuse] was happening, but it wasn't happening during the school day, as far as I know."* The spread of the reputation resulted in the teacher's not being able to start over with a clean slate and perhaps become an effective teacher by working on some of the professional improvement areas that Ernie was able to identify. In Ken's case the spread of the teacher's reputation not only to other communities, but also, more importantly, to other principals in the system made it more likely that the *"chances of transferring him elsewhere were slim to none, because I'm sure the story's out; that's just the way it is."* In both cases the spread of the

teacher's reputation seriously affected the variety of options available to deal with the problem.

Staff Dissension

Ken was faced with dealing with staff dissension based on the perception that the teacher in question was lazy and did not pull his weight:

> Ken. *Definitely his relationship with colleagues, and I would say probably everyone, was not good. He was one of those too who would arrive at ten to nine and leave right after the bell. If there was a Christmas concert, he wasn't really overly eager to pitch in, and so his collegiality wasn't up to what most of us like, especially—well, it's unfair to say especially in a small school, but you don't have a lot of people, so everybody has to pitch in, and it's rather noticed when you don't.*

The long-term relationship between the teacher involved and the staff of the school also created dissension when the staff supported the person as an individual, even if they recognized that professional problems existed:

> Frank. *He was just the kind of individual that you like to have on the staff. . . . Once the rest of your staff—and we have a staff of thirty-some—sniffs that somebody is getting a raw deal or is getting asked to leave, then you get a kind of martyr complex, and then you have that to deal with, where people rally around somebody they don't even necessarily—and the staff didn't respect him as an educator in class, but they respected him for lots of other reasons.*
>
> Ernie 2. *He did involve the ATA in that and I think had the staff on the verge of a major revolt. . . . [He had] been here a much longer period of time and had been an involved member of the staff and was willing to take part in extracurricular activities and do all kinds of useful things around the school; he was seen as being a good staff member.*

Ernie clearly had a very difficult issue to deal with because his staff perceived that *"you are trying to get rid of somebody who's given good service for a long period of time and not doing it really honestly."* At least in part, Ernie's difficulty may have been related to two factors which will be discussed later: politicizing the process and central office involvement.

Causing Problems Between the School and the Community

Three respondents addressed the issue of school-community relations and identified the negative fallout that coats the entire staff and school when the community perceives that there is an incompetent teacher in the classroom:

> Ken. *They were facing it [community concern about this teach]. . . . And then they may well have been sort of part of spreading it too. I mean, you know how that happens. Regrettably, and sort of sometimes by accident, you do that sort of thing. But we were all under the gun because of this guy.*
>
> *You know, you hate to say this about somebody, but it was true. Not that everything he did was terrible, but for the most part it made us all look really bad.*

> James. *When the community and people in general see this [incompetent teaching] happening, I think it devalues all teachers when you see this happening. . . . A lot of small schools all over the place where the community, the teaching staff, the administration all know that the teacher there is not performing at a satisfactory level.*

> Don. *The whole atmosphere of the school changed very, very quickly and very, very positively [after he left]. . . . When parents sent their kids to this school, a lot of them had the idea that as soon as they walked through the doors they were stepping into hell.*

Don was able to experience the almost immediate improvement in the community's view of the school after the perceived problem teacher left the school. I believe that it is significant that the three respondents who specifically identified the issue of school-community relations represent schools from the three smallest communities involved in the study. Not coincidentally, these three schools were also the most isolated geographically from larger centers, and according to the respondents, most of the staff lived in the immediate area of the school.

Politicizing the Process

It was previously mentioned that the process became politicized in the first case dealt with by Ernie; specifically, the community presented a petition to the board and central administration, who then tried to engineer a quick buyout agreement. The result of these actions was a coalescing of support for the teacher by his colleagues, creating staff dissension with which Ernie was left to deal after central office hastily retreated.

In Ken's case the politicization of the process may have been positive by ensuring the local trustee's support for action:

> Ken. *We have spoken to the staff here, and we know. His wife [the trustee's] does hair, and one of the ladies that used to go and have her hair done constantly was nattering about this man, so it wasn't like it was a secret over there either. So, yes, he [the trustee] would have definitely been onside and presented it saying, "This stuff happened, it's done, and this teacher was put in this situation, and we want him out of here. Let's go; let's get it done."*

Sense of Duty to the Community

Two of the respondents spoke at length about the informal information that is provided to a principal who lives in the community where the school is located. Both seemed to value the information but made it clear that this constant contact with the community created pressure to act on the community's concerns, even occasionally when the principal did not share those concerns:

> Tom. *They expect something, there's no doubt about it. You can't ignore it because they came to you as a friend almost, like "I know you, and I know you will do something about this, so do something." And if you don't—you have no choice; you have to. In their eyes it's a major thing; in your eyes it's a very minor thing, and you really don't think it's worth the time of day, but you've got to deal with it regardless, because those people are going to get back to you if you don't.*

James. *A lot of times people may just sort of very informally, because I live right in the community, tell me that they've got a problem with such-and-such happening in the classroom, and I'll say, "Hey, that sounds like it's interesting. It sounds like you have a valid point, and I think I'd like to explore that further. Could you come in? Could we talk?" "Well, oh, no, I don't really want to make any trouble." And then again, you're sort of left with, what do you do? Do you go to the teacher and say, "This parent has a concern"? because the parent really is not stating a concern. They're telling you they have a concern in kind of an informal way but will not formalize that. It would be easy for me to go to a teacher and say, "Well, I've talked to three or four parents, and they have a concern with whatever. I would find it a lot easier if I could go to a teacher and say, "I've had three parents express a concern about a particular item" than I would to say, "Well, I think . . ." or "I've heard through the grapevine . . . ." Or if I do go to a teacher, which I have done, I say, "Parents seem to have a concern about discipline or about a certain field trip they were on." Well, then, the first question is, "What parents?" "Well, I'm not at liberty to tell you" or "They didn't want their name to be used." Well, that almost—I mean, you're dead in the water.*

Confronting the Problem

The respondents chose to confront the problem through the use of intrasystem transfers, by trying to induce the teacher to resign/retire through positive means, and by attempting to coerce a retirement/ resignation. The respondents indicated that once the decision to confront the problem was reached and the chosen process initiated, there was often a time when they needed to determine what it would take to reach a successful—from their point of view—conclusion. This involved determining what incentives or adjustments to policy would be required to achieve the voluntary resignation. In one case the determining factor was creating a disincentive to stay, and in the final case a negotiated monetary settlement unrelated to early retirement was agreed upon. In several cases the existence of outside factors/influences contributed to the success of their efforts. In most cases the respondents used more than one approach to accomplish their objective of removing the teacher from their school.

Intrasystem Transfers

Induced or forced transfers within the system were used in four cases:

> Ernie. *One of the things that happened in terms of staffing here, several years ago we had a gentleman moved onto our staff from another school who had experienced some difficulties in the school both with parents and with the central administration, so we agreed to have him here.*
>
> Ken. . . . *had been transferred in when we reorganized our schools in the district.*
>
> James 2. *What happened with this teacher is that she transferred to another school in the district, and I did hear that there were difficulties at this other school, and in fact she was removed from this other school.*
>
> Craig. . . . *teacher who had been on this particular staff for about fifteen years and who had been on three other staffs in this school jurisdiction.*

Although transfers within the system were used in the above four cases, the difficulty of using intrasystem transfers was highlighted by Ken: *"The chances of transferring him elsewhere were slim to none, because I'm sure the story's out; that's just the way it is."*

Inducing Retirement (The Positive Approach)

When transfers or changes of teaching assignments did not resolve the problem, the administrative response in 5 out of the 10 cases discussed by the seven respondents was to enter a period of encouraging the teacher to consider other alternatives, primarily early retirement. The subject of retirement was broached positively in the form of information about early-retirement policies and by presenting retirement as a viable and desirable option. The following comments indicate the variety of approaches used.

Persistent Revisiting of the Issue

The persistent revisiting of the issue of retirement was best described by Ken, who used this approach with both of his teachers. In the first case he used the existence of an early-retirement policy as a means to keep the possibility clearly in focus:

> Ken. *A couple of years ago we were reviewing the policy on early retirement, and I kind of kept talking to him about it. I must admit, I didn't come right out and ask him, but I sort of said, "What do you think of the policy?" and did he think it would work for teachers who were not at retirement age? . . . We went through kind of another part of the year, but we kept talking about it, it came up in meetings. And then I did a survey of the staff, and he checked* no, *he wasn't interested in early dismissal [retirement], and I guess I was disappointed [laughs]. And then the district would do one, and he would check* no, *and all of a sudden out of the blue, I don't know what happened, he then checked, well, he put a* yes, *maybe.*
>
> *I don't know what I did, if anything, that made him realize that, hey, I wasn't going to give up, even gently. He kept seeing me shoving my [early-retirement] policy at him in some way, and for some reason he saw that there was enough money in it, and he took his time. He saw the wisdom of something other than working here.*

In his second case he continually talked about retirement and the fact that the teacher had already earned her full pension:

> Ken 2. *We didn't have an early-retirement policy then, so we'd talk about what it would be like to be retired and how close she was and far away—and I don't think it really had much to do with the input other than I think I started painting it as a good picture. . . . I started trying to show her: "You're not gaining anything sort of significant here. You're just kind of keeping time with the rest. It would be different if you were trying to get the best five years and always doubting, but thirty-seven years: What are you doing?*
>
> *All of a sudden she came in one day and she said, "You know, I've been really thinking about that. I probably will, if you find me some information." Well, I went and opened the lines with the people and contacted Barnett House for her, and she took her retirement.*
>
> *So for whatever reason, I think, again, talking about retirement helped her see that this is an objective and it's an honorable way out, and it may be a sad way out, but at least she had a way to go.*
>
> *It wasn't done overnight; it took sort of better than a year or so just working and recognizing that there was a problem.*

Ken demonstrated the importance of board support for exploring creative alternatives when he summarized his involvement in these two cases:

Ken. *And in both cases I have to say, I guess I was fortunate that it worked out, because both cases could have been something where I would have had to work real hard to get something done, and probably harder on this fellow—although I guess if I hadn't been prepared to start saying, "You know, there's this policy you could look at," right?*

Ken was clearly convinced that something had to be done that would be good for the school and good for the students, but he needed the board and central administration to support him and

Ken. . . . *enhance the package, change the wording, and get them so that we could go. Obviously, the superintendent and the deputy superintendent did a good job of presenting the case and showing where we'd been and probably had the record filed and the letters written over a period of time and various people saying, "This is in everybody's best interest, and we're never going to get away any cheaper than we are now."*

We all just decided, Well, let's find out what it would take.

We had to go against our policy. . . . They passed the age thing, because he was well under the age that the policy would recognize. He's still not of an age now where he can get the teachers' pension, so the district is carrying him minimally. They boosted the amounts and changed the schedule of how they would pay it.

They had to go to board resolution, and the superintendent had to explain the situation, that it would be one of those things done, whatever you call that [in camera].

So he took the early-retirement package.

Ernie, like Ken, had an early-retirement incentive policy to use as a starting point for discussion which allowed a mutually agreeable departure eventually to be arranged:

Ernie. *So the board passed an early-retirement incentive policy, and I sat down with him one day to discuss whether or not he might be interested in that kind of thing. Because he was beyond the age of fifty, the early-retirement incentive plan didn't really provide him with the kind of money he felt that he needed to have if he was going to leave the profession. He had taught by that time about, I think, thirty-one or thirty-two years and would really have liked to stick around until he'd put in thirty-five. So I discussed this with the superintendent, and he agreed that they would sit down with him and try to negotiate a buyout for this contract. And in fact they did come up with sufficient dollars to at least intrigue him in terms of leaving voluntarily, and he did, so the resolution, I think, was satisfactory to him.*

Frank initially tried an approach similar to that used by Ken and Ernie to persuade his problem teacher to consider early retirement, as is evidenced by this excerpt:

> Frank. *By this time he was approaching his mid-fifties, so that did give me a window of opportunity, and so I started discussions with him and said to him that he should look at taking an early retirement, that he doesn't handle the students really well in class. Even though we had been good colleagues with each other, I just had to be very frank and honest with him in that regard, that he was not making any headway in it and so on. . . . [However, it soon] became clear to me that he wasn't going to move, that if there was going to be any movement done, that I was going to have to get more creative than that. But it did open up the discussion that we were going to bring this thing to some sort of conclusion and that he knew what my position on it was.*

Unlike Ken, Frank did not have *board* and central administration support for an early-retirement package:

> Frank. *I spoke with the superintendent a number of times on the matter. I asked if there were any early-retirement incentives that we could dangle in front of him, so to speak. At that time there wasn't anything forthcoming.*

Early-retirement policies were seen to represent an opportunity to leave with dignity and some financial security. Ernie, on the other hand, was able to use this approach to persuade his first teacher to enter into a period of negotiations that led to his accepting an enhanced early-retirement package.

In these three cases the respondents were able to broach the subject of early retirement and portray it as a viable and desirable way of exiting the profession with dignity.

Frank concluded that he *"had to devise some sort of plan to move Bob, for lack of better words, off our school system."* Having reached this conclusion, Frank used the teacher's age (mid 50s) and his problems handling students to broach the subject of early retirement. He hoped that

"he would go home and reflect and come back and say, 'You know, you're right. It is time for me to go off to a different career' and so on, and that would be the end of it."

In Frank's words, *"Well, of course that didn't happen,"* and he had to continue the process of *"moving Bob off our school system"* using different means.

Inducing Retirement (The Coercive Approach)

Application of Internal Pressure Over Time

Several of the respondents spoke about changing teaching assignments as a means of trying to help a teacher in difficulty or as a means to minimize the damage the problem teacher could inflict on students, but in only one case was this used in an attempt to force the teacher to resign. Frank openly admitted that when his suggestion that the teacher consider early retirement was rejected, he decided to "roll the dice" and scheduled the teacher for far less counselling time and a teaching assignment that he knew would be difficult for the teacher. Although this action did not result in an immediate resignation, it did open up a period of negotiations and seeking acceptable alternatives by both sides. The alternatives included different variations on half-time counselling over a two-year period, which was satisfactory to the teacher but Frank felt was unsatisfactory in terms of delivering counselling services to the students. He then made a further decision to schedule the teacher for full-time work, including half-time classroom teaching. The teacher felt that he could not handle the teaching and decided to resign. Even in this case changing teaching assignments as a disincentive to stay was tempered by what I believe was genuine concern for the welfare of the teacher.

The application of pressure by the principal over time was used by most respondents, with Frank and Craig providing the clearest examples of this phenomenon. The most intricate example was clearly described by Frank:

> Frank. *It became clear to me that he wasn't going to move, that if there was going to be any movement done, I was going to have to get more creative than that. But it did open up the discussion that we were going to bring this thing to some sort of conclusion and that he knew that my position on it was that he needed to be—I spoke with the superintendent a number of times on the matter. I asked if there were any early-retirement incentives that we could dangle in front of him, so to speak. At that time there wasn't anything forthcoming, so what I did to precipitate matters and to bring them to a head is that I was scheduling for the next year, and I cut back his guidance time, and I rolled the dice and decided that I was going to give him a heavy workload in areas where he had had lots of trouble before, and he just literally came unglued. He just said that he couldn't emotionally handle that kind of workload, and so I said, "Well, if that's the case, then I'm in a bind here, and I have to have you cover these kinds of courses," knowing in the back of my mind that I didn't think he would want this or accept the new teaching workload.*

Although the strategy was not immediately successful, it did open up a period of negotiations that eventually led to the desired result:

> Frank. *I got my first break when he said that, "Well, maybe we could negotiate me working half time." That was the first major breakthrough I had with him, and so I said I needed time to think about it, and I discussed it with my colleagues. We had decided that, yes, we would put him on half-time guidance, with the idea that down the road he would perhaps consider dropping out altogether. And so when I called Bob back in and we went through the discussion again, I said, "We will offer you half-time guidance in the afternoons."*
>
> *In terms of his retirement he was still short a number of years, and he said he couldn't possibly afford to quit teaching altogether and that he had to keep his foot in the door. But at any rate he did accept the half-time guidance, and he came in the afternoons. . . .*
>
> *After a year with this arrangement, he came back, we went through the discussion of it all again, he still wasn't ready to let it go and he still had too many years away from retirement to want to go for it. Even though his age was getting close enough because he had worked in Forestry earlier, he was short another year. At that time the magic number was thirty-five years, and I think he had about twenty-six years, and so he did his calculations and was quite a few dollars short. But he was admitting that he was feeling better and his headaches had gone away and that he felt better about himself and*

that he wasn't bitter that we'd done what we had done and that it was really a godsend that we had done that.

Now, nonetheless, in spite of things working well for him, we weren't getting the guidance services that we needed because a lot of our problems were happening at times when he wasn't there. And then he wanted to negotiate half time, but on two days one week and three days the next week, and he had all kinds of schemes that would suit him better and so on. And so I had another discussion with my colleagues, and we said, "Okay, we'll try that for a time," and so we did. And then it wasn't satisfactory for us, it seemed to be fairly satisfactory for him, and so I called him in part way through the year and just said that this is not going to work and in the next semester I would have to drop the half time and put him back in teaching because we had a maternity leave, and I wanted him to cover those classes. At that point he said, "I've been out now long enough, away from school long enough, I just can't go back into the classroom; I just can't." And he said, "I don't have any option now except to retire." And so I said, "That'll be something you have to take up with the superintendent, but," I said, "if you would like to contract some of the services for testing and so on . . . ." I'd already had prior approval from the superintendent, and he was really happy about it because he was starting to establish a clientele in his private little practice, and now here's an opportunity to break in with the school and get some contract work. And in the end he did sign off and resign.

The most prolonged and bitter of the cases my respondents discussed was described by Craig, who was involved in a five-year process of supervision, evaluation, submissions to central office, allegations, counterallegations, and ATA investigations—probably more accurately, a five-year battle—to remove a teacher who he felt was ethically and morally unfit to teach. The years of supervision, evaluation, documentation, and ATA investigations culminated in the series of events he described here:

Craig. *The teacher looked very badly, and further documentation went forward. By this time our school board finally decided to get involved; our superintendent finally got involved. We had a number of hearings with the superintendent. I made a number of allegations; they were refuted by the teacher. We had a number of meetings; we probably were involved in three or four meetings that the superintendent chaired. All the old documentation was pulled out, the teacher was asked to respond to it, and the venom was thick. And when we were finally finished, the superintendent drafted a letter to this teacher, indicating that a number of areas needed to be attended to, that he was basically given this first and last warning. If these kinds of situations were repeated, they could be—not that they would be, but they could be—grounds for termination. The teacher was*

> *visibly shaken, again called ATA, and Legal Services from ATA, Mr. [ ], came out. We had two more rounds of meetings with the superintendent, ATA Legal Services, and the teacher and myself. When it was finally concluded, the letter of the superintendent was upheld, the teacher was given a reprimand, and the very next day the teacher went on medical leave and was on medical leave for one year.*

Craig explained what was for him the final chapter of the story:

> Craig. *The teacher was required to return to duty or seek more medical leave. The teacher was planning on returning to duty, and the board, the district office personnel, asked me if we wanted the teacher back. Our answer was, "No, definitely not," and they entered into a number of months of negotiation on a buyout package, and the teacher has since left our system.*

Application of External Pressure to Leave the System

The application of external pressure was a significant factor in three of the cases discussed by the respondents. The pressure included parent/community involvement and/or central office involvement.

Tom's case involved a teacher who made comments in class revealing information about himself that eventually led to a charge of unprofessional conduct against him. The parental response to these revelations was to threaten the withdrawal of their children from the school unless the teacher was removed. These parental threats led to a meeting between Tom, the teacher, and an ATA staff officer. The teacher was advised by the ATA staff officer to resign, which he did; subsequently, the ATA laid a charge of unprofessional conduct against this teacher.

In Ernie's second case a petition from the community to the *board* sought the removal of this teacher. Central office personnel then became involved and attempted to negotiate an agreement to remove the teacher from the school through an early-retirement package, sabbatical, or resignation. Their attempts created staff dissension and failed to achieve the

objective of removing the teacher from the school, where he remained on staff until reaching full retirement.

In the final case there had been a five-year-long series of evaluations, submissions to central office, and investigations by the ATA which culminated in a letter of reprimand being issued by the superintendent. The letter of reprimand, which threatened termination unless specific conditions were met, was upheld at the *board* hearing, where the teacher was represented by the ATA. Immediately after the teacher went on extended medical leave, and upon his scheduled return from this medical leave, the central office entered into a period of negotiations that resulted in a buyout of the teacher's contract.

In each of these cases a time was reached when action became necessary to determine what it would take to get the teacher out of the system. This process of determining what it would take forms the basis of the next category of data.

External pressure to leave the system took the form of community action and central office involvement. Community action involves more than parental complaints, which we have seen are a major impetus to administrative action, but goes further to direct action.

In Ernie's second situation his central office initiated the process of trying to induce/coerce a resignation/retirement. The result was less than satisfactory, in Ernie's view, because the initiation of the discussion was handled by central administration.

> Ernie 2. *The superintendency got involved in handling that, and their response was—I mean, I did not initiate this—their response was to come over and attempt to go through the process of giving him the option of voluntary retirement. . . . He refused the buyout package. . . . The alternatives that were offered him were all legitimate: a*

transfer or sabbatical or a resignation or a complete change of teaching assignment. Those were the kinds of things that they offered him.

In Tom's case the direct action was the parents' threat to withdraw their children from the school if the teacher involved remained on staff. In Ernie's second case the community action took the form of a petition to the *board* seeking the removal of the teacher, which led to central office action.

In Ernie's second case and in Craig's case central office became directly involved in the process. Upon the *board*'s receipt of the petition from the community, central office staff approached the teacher to attempt to negotiate an early retirement, sabbatical, or resignation. In Craig's case, after five years of evaluations, submissions, and ATA investigations, the superintendent finally issued a reprimand to the teacher, who immediately went on extended medical leave. Upon the teacher's scheduled return from medical leave, the central office started a period of negotiations with the teacher that eventually led to a negotiated buyout of his contract.

The sixth case of coerced retirement or resignation involved a five-year-long supervision and evaluation process, followed by an extended medical leave and, finally, a negotiated agreement to resign in return for a financial settlement.

Dismissal Unrelated to Competency Issues

In three of the remaining cases the teacher was dismissed or resigned under pressure. The respondents had comments such as the following on the events leading to dismissal:

Tom. *I would have this person commit to myself that certain things wouldn't happen again, and then I would send a letter to those parents who had complained, or I would phone those if it had been [an oral] complaint and say, "Look, I think I've got this under control, and I've talked to this person," and that seemed to be satisfactory.*

But as time went on I realized that there was sort of a momentum building up there in the community where the parents, who were quite close knit because of the type of parents that they were, were building up a momentum here, and I probably—maybe it was in hindsight; I'm not even sure it was in foresight, but certainly in hindsight—I could see that coming. And probably I chose not to do a great deal about it, because I felt this eventually is going to solve the problem, if the person doesn't solve the problem himself, and I think that option was always there: "Look, you'd better get your act together because if you don't, you're going to pay the consequences." . . .

I got a letter from the teacher saying, "Look, I want you to tell me what went on, and I want you to make a commitment that this will never happen again, and I want it on paper." And the teacher did that, so I sent a copy to that particular parent, plus a few other parents. We were getting close to the end of the year, so it was one of those kinds of things where if you can keep the lid on till the end of the year, maybe you can get this person to get going in a different direction.

So finally on a given day, I got a phone call again at night around ten o'clock, and I had this parent come in and see me, and this parent said, "Do you know what went on in the classroom yesterday?" and I said, "No," and I was told. Saturday morning I had a phone call from a group of parents saying, "Look, either this person goes, or we don't send our kids back to school." So, of course, I didn't have much choice, but the parents had spoken, and within forty-eight hours the teacher was gone. And I guess the bottom line is, I didn't have to do a great deal; the parents did it.

In this particular case the ATA was involved and did not oppose the move to dismiss. Subsequently, this teacher was the subject of an investigation for professional misconduct and was found guilty.

The second case of dismissal involved alleged mishandling of school funds. The respondent described the process as follows:

James. *She had kept up petty cash records, and there were discrepancies. When I reviewed the petty cash account, it seemed that there were funds missing. When I noticed that there were funds missing, I approached her and said there was a problem with either the accounting or other problems. . . . She didn't agree that there was a problem with the accounting and said that her records were correct, yet when I did go to the bank and look at the bank records, there was a problem. The records were not accurate. We discussed it on a number of occasions. Finally, I did get the bank records and her own records and did tell her that in fact I did have evidence that there was a problem with the records and that I would then get the assistance of the Superintendent of Schools to check into it, which is what happened. And basically, . . . she was asked for her resignation by the superintendent, and she offered it.*

The third dismissal was unique in that it involved a teacher employed by the Canadian government to teach on an Indian Reserve. The unique characteristics of this situation were described as follows:

> James 2. *I guess it got to the place where I did ask the superintendent to become involved, to see what he felt he could do. And then the band at that time that I worked for had an education coordinator, and we asked that he become involved. . . . Basically what happened with this teacher was that what's called a BCR—a band council resolution—was passed saying that she not be allowed on the reserve. Now, even though with the federal government she still maintained her job, she can no longer do it.*

In each of these three cases the teacher was ultimately dismissed, not because of the incompetent or marginal teaching performance that the respondents had described, but for misdeeds.

Tom described his teacher as having classroom-management problems and deficiencies in planning so serious that he and/or his vice-principal checked lesson plans daily. Yet the teacher was dismissed not because of these two deficiencies, but because of a series of comments and revelations about himself to his class that would eventually lead to unprofessional-conduct charges being laid against him by the ATA. James was able to get the resignation of his vice-principal as a result of her mismanagement of school funds, not as a result of the problems he described her having in the areas of teaching technique, classroom management, and rapport with students and staff. James 2 was able to get a BCR, which effectively ended the teacher's career on that particular reserve based on the band's objections to her after-hours social activities on the reserve, not as a result of the planning and management deficiencies that existed.

These three teachers were dismissed—or, more accurately, forced to resign—because of specific misdeeds not because of their history of providing incompetent or marginal teaching service.

Medical Leave

The final case resulted in the teacher going on extended medical leave:

> Don. *Nothing was said [about the change in teaching assignment for the new school year]; he accepted his assignment. We had our opening staff meeting, we had our opening day of meeting with students, and then we had our first day of what I would call regular instruction. At the end of that day at three-thirty he came into the office. He didn't tell me, he told our secretary that he was finished as of that moment, that he had a doctor's certificate exempting him for medical reasons.*

As was the case with the three dismissals that we have just examined, this teacher left his teaching post not because of the planning, management, and rapport problems that had been documented, but because he was able to get a doctor to support his application for long-term medical leave. Whether the leave was truly legitimate or not is irrelevant; what is relevant is that once again the teacher left not because of documented marginal or incompetent teaching performance, but because of circumstances that, from the respondent's point of view, could only be seen as fortuitous.

We have seen the range of respondents' actions taken after the decision was made to confront the problem. The process varied but commonly included one or more of a persistent revisiting of the issue by the respondents, the application of internal pressure over time, or the application of external pressure.

Outside Influences

The respondents were able in three cases to identify outside factors which may have influenced the teachers to consider resigning. In two cases the existence of alternate careers which could lessen the financial impact played a prominent role in the decision; in the final case family considerations and the availability of full pension played a major role.

Availability of Alternate Careers

Ken. *He had a little bit of a farm going. He was big on pigeons or birds. He was in one of those clubs that did great things with chickens and pigeons and whatever, and I think he really wanted to do that more than this but just couldn't bring himself to accept that or say it or face it, or maybe it wasn't financially viable. I don't know how big a farm he had. I know he had more than one quarter section, so, whether we were just the passing-through point or not, I don't know. I'm sure that had some effect on it. . . . I think he really wanted to go farming but didn't want me or you or anybody to say that he should.*

Frank. *At any rate he did accept the half-time guidance, and he came in the afternoons. It allowed him to experience time away from school, and he used that time to network and to set up a company of his own where he started to do some private guidance work. And while he didn't get it off to a spectacular start, it did allow him to start exploring, looking at other avenues. . . .*

[Eventually, when the decision to resign was reached], I said, "If you would like to contract some of the services for testing and so on . . . ." I'd already had prior approval from the superintendent, and he was really happy about it because he was starting to establish a clientele in his private little practice, and now here's an opportunity to break in with the school and get some contract work.

Family Considerations and Availability of Full Pension

Ken 2. *Her husband had some health problems, and he was thinking of retiring, [and] I started trying to show her: "You're not gaining anything sort of significant here. You're just kind of keeping time with the rest. It would be different if you were trying to get the best five years and always doubting, but thirty-seven years: What are you doing?*

Responses by the Teacher

The respondents identified various responses by the teachers that tended to disrupt the process. These included stonewalling, capitulating, and defending.

Stonewalling

All respondents identified stonewalling as part of the teacher's response. Stonewalling involved either a refusal to recognize that change was necessary or the use of extended medical leave to delay/disrupt the process.

Refusal to Recognize That Change Was Necessary

> Ken. *He wouldn't work on anything involving teaching practice; he thought he was doing just fine. We were the ones with the problem; he was fine. And it was one of those things. We couldn't get him to read between the lines. You know what I'm trying to say. It was just pendulums all over the place.*
>
> Don. *Whenever we spoke with an individual—that's [me] or my vice-principal and guidance counsellor—we spoke to him about it, and he was not willing to listen to any of those concerns. Again it was, "My rules are reasonable, and I'm reasonable, and I'll enforce them the way I want to."*
>
> Craig. *I went back to meet with the teacher, having shared a carbon copy of that letter that I sent to the superintendent, and I was met by a hostile, angry teacher who basically denied the allegations.*
>
> James 2. *[She] refused to have him visit her classroom to the point of locking the door when he was at the school.*

Use of Extended Medical Leave to Delay/Disrupt Process

Extended medical leave was used in two of the cases discussed by the respondents. The first use involved the teacher whom Craig spent over five years trying to get out of his school and away from children. The

culmination of five-and-a-half years of incidents, evaluations, reports, rebuttals, ATA investigations, and, finally, central office intervention by issuing a formal reprimand to the teacher by the superintendent. When this occurred, the teacher immediately went on extended medical leave, and eventually when he was slated to return to service, a buyout was negotiated.

The second case involved Don's teacher, who had serious rapport problems with students and staff. After a reorganization of the school structure, his teaching assignment changed somewhat, which he did not protest, but at the end of the third operational day of the new school year he presented the secretary with a medical certificate and left, never to return. The respondent believed that the teacher remained on extended medical leave for either one or two years and then retired.

More commonly, the reaction was to enter into a series of defensive actions characterized by the adoption of a belligerent, defensive, or noncooperative attitude. This period was characterized by appeals to higher authorities, counterarguments, counteroffensive/aggressive action, attempts to split the opposition, appeals to professional principles, and, finally, attempts to negotiate, as is evident in the following excerpts.

Defending

Appeals to Higher Authorities or Neutral Third Parties

> Craig. *And he received that direction from myself, supported by the department head. He challenged that position to the Superintendent of Schools.*
>
> Ken. *I requested a meeting with him, and at the meeting he insisted he have a third party there, so he had a co-worker from staff who was a strong ATA person at the meeting. Then he followed that up—my understanding—with some letters to ATA, so obviously the pattern was being set.*

Ernie 2. *He did involve the ATA in that and, I think, had the staff on the verge of a major revolt.*

Craig. *He contacted . . . a physical education consultant to talk about the problems our expectations of his nonparticipation would create and tried to solicit support and got a very wishy-washy statement back which didn't support him, but it didn't support us either, and then he wanted to contest that further.*

The principals who participated in this study found third-party intervention to be frustrating and disruptive to the process. The involvement of third parties in the process complicated matters for the respondents, but, as we shall see in a later section, they did not object to this involvement but recognized it as necessary to the protection of the rights of the individual teacher. Their concern was primarily over the lengths to which the ATA will go to protect what they saw as clearly incompetent teachers. This concern will be addressed fully in a later section.

Counterarguments

Craig. *Again that was documented. His rebuttal to the letter to the superintendent was just as I've stated: that the means somewhat justified the ends, or the ends were justified by the means, or whatever.*

When I asked the teacher to replicate them so I could see how the marks were arrived at, he refused to do so, indicating I was challenging his professional competencies. I became boxed, had to call the central office to indicate that they wanted it replicated, and he then attempted to replicate the marks that he had assigned to the report cards, but like [me], he couldn't replicate eighty percent of the grades.

Ken. *Whenever I'd try to discuss the situation with him he was very sort of belligerent. He was defensive. And to question anything, he was just inflammatory, just unreal.*

He was one of those, he used to say, "I wonder who evaluates the evaluators"; you know, one of those kinds of things. . . . Was just a battle. You would start to say something, and it was just a battle. He would haul out every reference.

Frank. *I had my suspicions that there was some smoke and mirrors going on and that the confidentiality thing that he kept grabbing onto was a buzzword to mean that he wasn't really working that hard in that field.*

Counteroffensives/Aggressive Action

> Don. *When I questioned him about it, he became very belligerent in front of another student and, in fact, in front of another staff member. He told me in front of our guidance counsellor that he would not cooperate with me in any way, shape, or form.*
>
> James 2. *[She] said that she was being harassed by the superintendent.*
>
> Craig. *Amidst all of this documentation, this particular teacher approached ATA Legal Services and accused me of harassment. ATA Legal Services came in and met with me to find out what the circumstances were surrounding it.*

Splitting the Opposition

> Craig. . . . *setting up confrontation between myself, himself, and certainly the students who had reported the incident.*

Appeals to Professional Principles

> Frank. *He got very defensive about having to report the numbers of kids he was seeing and so on. He saw that as an intrusion into the whole counselling field and the confidentiality and so on and so on.*
>
> Craig. *He refused to do so [replicate his marks], indicating I was challenging his professional competencies.*

Capitulating

In some cases the teacher appeared to capitulate and "give up the battle" and accept reassignment after an initial defensive action:

> Ken. *He resisted at first but eventually saw that, rather than fight, it might be easier to take a regular classroom.*

However, Frank's teacher, after three years of cajoling, coercing, and negotiating, decided that he was unwilling to accept the teaching

assignment that Frank was offering and stated, *"I don't have any option now except to retire."*

Negotiation and Settlement

Understandably, the teachers involved often sought to negotiate a settlement to the problem that they felt would best meet their needs. In one case the jurisdiction was in the process of drafting an early-retirement incentive policy. Ken used this opportunity to broach the subject of early retirement by asking the teacher what he thought of the policy. The teacher *"made some recommendations, and the policy did change just a little, but it still wasn't good enough . . . to meet his needs."* This discussion of the policy did, however, open up discussion of the subject of early retirement and led to a period of negotiation.

Ernie, like Ken, was able to use the passing of an early-retirement incentive policy by his *board* to broach the subject of early retirement with the teacher. Eventually, this discussion involved central office personnel in a period of negotiations that ultimately led to an early-retirement package acceptable to all parties.

Craig and Frank were also involved in a negotiation process in an attempt to solve their respective problems. In Craig's case the negotiations involved a buyout of the teacher's contract unrelated to early retirement, whereas Frank was involved in negotiating a series of part-time teaching assignments designed to minimize the teacher's contact with classes and which, Frank hoped, would eventually lead to the teacher's resignation.

In the final case the teacher tried, unsuccessfully, to negotiate *"in a meeting held with this teacher, [the principal], and the superintendent. The*

teacher said she would resign if she would get a good reference so that she could get a position elsewhere."

In each of the four cases discussed by the respondents, where the eventual decision by the teacher was to retire/resign from the teaching profession, there seemed to be a point in the process where the teacher reached a grudging acceptance of the idea. In Ken's first case it came after repeated surveying of the staff by Ken and the jurisdiction to determine if anyone was interested in early retirement. On the third survey the teacher finally indicated, "Yes, maybe." Ken's second teacher approached him and stated that she had been thinking about retirement, and if he would help her get some information from the Teacher Retirement Fund, then she would consider it. Ernie's first teacher declared that he would be willing to consider the idea if central office would be willing to negotiate some changes to the package. Frank's teacher, as we saw previously, was unwilling to accept his teaching assignment and chose to resign.

The respondents attempted to accommodate and facilitate these negotiated arrangements, with the exception of the request for positive references, which was rejected by both the principal and the superintendent involved. When the initiative to open negotiations came from the teacher, the outcomes tended to be viewed as positive by the respondents, whereas the initiation of negotiations by central office tended to have negative outcomes, according to the respondents.

In three of the cases where the respondents directly broached the subject of resignation or retirement, the teachers, at least initially, rejected the idea outright. Frank indicated that it was clear to him that the teacher was not going to move, and Craig found himself dealing with the ATA after the teacher appealed a reprimand from the superintendent. In Ernie's case

the teacher rejected the idea and contacted the ATA for support *"because he was close to retirement; he didn't really want to give up the ship."* Ernie was then faced with a virtual staff revolt over what the staff perceived as unfair treatment of their colleague by central office.

Effects of the Conflict

Effects on the Principal

The respondents all indicated that they found the process to be an emotional and stressful time in their lives. The most common emotions appeared to be anguish and self-doubt coupled with frustration, followed by anger and guilt.

Anguish and Self-Doubt

> Ken. *We anguished about what to do. . . . I would go home, and I lost sleep over it. Definitely. I mean, I suffered; he didn't. I would come to work and wait for the next shoe to fall and then find out that the guy didn't have two feet; he was a centipede! Waiting for the next phone call; it was just—I'm the one who went through hell. And who eats Tums? Me, right? That sort of thing.*
>
> Frank. *To be honest, I didn't really enjoy it. . . . I was focused on what . . . I was going to do, but, in terms of how I felt, I don't know, I just kind of felt like I was turning against my own children. It was really, really hard.*
>
> Ernie 2. *It's more difficult when you're dealing with [long-term staff members] than when somebody's relative new and you've got to make that decision based on just what's best for the school. . . . It was a stressful time.*
>
> Don. *I believe I found it fairly uncomfortable because it was my first year as the principal, and up to that point I had really not done teacher evaluations, so I felt a little bit uncomfortable in terms of the whole process. But I felt comfortable with the fact that he needed to be evaluated along with the other people on my list.*

Frustration

Ken. . . . *another stone on my back. You're trying not to get drawn into that web, but you do, and then you think, Aw, that's not the way I'm supposed to do this. But it was constant. I never saw anything like it in my life.*

And it's frustrating because you can't see why he can't see it. I just wanted to come in and get on with the job here. And invariably something would go wrong, and I guess I'd go home and toss and turn at night, and [laughs] who's on Prozac, him or me? You know the sort of situation, right?

James 2. *It was just a very long and a very frustrating process.*

Anger

Ken. *There were moments [I] could just choke him, but I didn't dislike him.*

Ernie. *I felt like I was being put in a position where they were dumping the responsibility for getting rid of him, in effect, onto me, that I was the one who was to provide the pressure on him to voluntarily resign.*

Craig. *I was annoyed by the ATA's involvement initially because I was quite convinced that I had dotted all my i's and crossed all my t's, and I had this guy dead to rights in terms of not doing a good job. And through the process of challenging me and my motives and my evaluation practices and standards and so forth, I for a period of time was on the hotseat rather than the accused, and that annoyed me greatly.*

I just felt like I was left hanging [by central office] for an awful long time.

Guilt

Ken. . . . *trying not to be the demon while doing it, and hopefully—I'm sure he doesn't think kindly of me, but that's fine. It's over, for me. We've never spoken since, and that's probably okay. He phoned in and had his name put on the sub list, and we were very noble. We put his name on the list, and God forbid, the first person who calls him—no [laughs]. There's no use—now you don't have to be miserable about it.*

Frank. *I take a certain amount of responsibility, and maybe I should take all the responsibility, that we really didn't monitor our teachers in the 'sixties and 'seventies, nor did we monitor our counsellors.*

The emotional effect of the conflict was magnified for some respondents by the fact that they had a long-term personal and professional relationship with the teacher involved, which three of the respondents specifically identified as a problem for them. In each case it appears that the respondents experienced serious emotional conflict over their roles:

> Ken 2. *It was hard for me; I found that one hard because she was here long before me.*
>
> Frank. *Even though we had been good colleagues with each other, I just had to be very frank and honest with him . . . in terms of how I felt. I don't know, I just kind of felt like I was turning against my own children. It was really, really hard because it's somebody that I respected and enjoyed his company and shared lots of great experiences over the years.*
>
> Ernie 2. *That makes it delicate too, to be quite a close-knit group, know these people socially as well as professionally. I guess that's one of the reasons why I am somewhat hesitant to say much—a man who had been here since the school opened, so, in other words, I've worked with him his full career almost. I had known the man for thirty years, and I worked with him. I had four kids take his classes; I knew what his failings were.*

Ken and Frank both made specific comments about the teacher not leaving bitter, even actually thanking them for helping them reach the decision to leave. It seems apparent that it was important to their emotional health that they did not have to continue to perceive themselves as the 'heavy' in the scenario. Ernie did not make similar comments, largely, I suspect, because the teacher remained on staff and remained a problem. He was, however, clear in his objections to the way his *board* and central office handled the situation with this particular staff member.

Don also commented on the length of the personal and professional relationship: *"The problem, I guess, that arose with this particular case was one that developed over a long period of time, had started long before I was principal but while I was a member of this staff."* In this case there was a

clear indication that the personal and professional relationship, although long, was not close. The lack of a close relationship and generally negative relations between the teacher involved and the rest of the staff appear to have mitigated some of the difficulties created by long-term relationships in the other three cases.

The emotions experienced and described by the respondents were often not discrete, but complex, interwoven sets. This interrelationship is most dramatically portrayed by the following outpouring of emotion from the last respondent when I asked him to describe his feelings and emotions:

> Craig. *The feelings and emotions I went through—I think they started with annoyance with the individual teacher, just, "How can you be so silly? How can you get yourself into such stupid situations?" And then it probably went to frustration with the individual, because initially we did try and provide direction and some help for him. And the frustration was that in his mind there wasn't anything wrong, and "You guys are seeing something that isn't there." And it didn't matter sort of what we chose to show him in print form or whatever, he never saw it as a problem—maybe a defence mechanism on his part. So the frustration that he wasn't prepared or didn't appear to be prepared to move, to re-examine his activities, and to do any changing. And then it was anger in terms of the confrontational way it ended up—not ended up—it started to become. It was him against [me], him defending a position he felt strongly about, and me defending a position I felt strongly about, and I was angry with him, and then I became angry with central office. . . . And then I think through a period of time it was one of exasperation. No, there was a time when there was a lot of self-reflection on my part, and I did a lot of talking with my vice-principals and with my wife with regard to, "Am I picking on him? Am I looking for situations? Am I being fair in my documentation? This guy is adamant that these things aren't happening the way I'm seeing them. Am I looking through funny glasses and misconstruing the situation so badly as to make him look way worse than he really was?" So there was a real period of self-examination on my part that, "Jesus, maybe I am wrong here?" And then there became, I guess, a sense that, "No, I'm pretty convinced that this is not a good person for kids." . . . And so there was the bulldog attitude that it's time to move and take some pretty serious steps. . . . The feelings and emotions I went through—I think they started with annoyance with the individual teacher, just, "How can you be so silly? How can you get yourself into such stupid situations?" And then it probably went to frustration with the individual because initially we did try and provide direction and some help for him. And the frustration was that in his mind there wasn't anything wrong, and "You guys are seeing something that isn't*

there." And it didn't matter sort of what we chose to show him in print form or whatever, he never saw it as a problem—maybe a defence mechanism on his part. So the frustration that he wasn't prepared or didn't appear to be prepared to move, to re-examine his activities, and to do any changing. And then it was anger in terms of the confrontational way it ended up—not ended up—it started to become. It was him against myself, him defending a position he felt strongly about, and me defending a position I felt strongly about, and I was angry with him, and then I became angry with central office, their rather blasé interest in becoming involved in what was shaping up to be a pretty dirty situation. And then I think through a period of time it was one of exasperation. No, there was a time when there was a lot of self-reflection on my part, and I did a lot of talking with my vice-principals and with my wife with regard to, "Am I picking on him? Am I looking for situations? Am I being fair in my documentation? This guy is adamant that these things aren't happening the way I'm seeing them. Am I looking through funny glasses and misconstruing the situation so badly as to make him look way worse than he really was?" So there was a real period of self-examination on my part that, Jesus, maybe I am wrong here. And then there became, I guess, a sense that, No, I'm pretty convinced that this is not a good person for kids. And then I guess there became sort of a bulldog attitude that, dammit, this guy's not good for kids. I've been put in this position . . . and that as a result of him not being good for kids, I was placed here to do a job, and while it's pretty dirty and pretty messy and it's probably one I would rather not take on, I had a responsibility that now it's time to roll up my sleeves, and if he wants to play dirty, I guess I've got to play dirty. I've got to get all my i's dotted and my t's crossed and do what I can through appropriate channels to minimize his contact with kids. And in my mind at that point in time I saw myself being determined that this gentleman had to be out of my school, perhaps out of the system, perhaps out of education; and while I couldn't control a lot of that, I could perhaps control him being out of my school. And so there was the bulldog attitude that it's time to move and take some pretty serious steps. . . . As much as I got anxiety over all of this, I know he's got anxiety over it all, his family is affected by it, as has mine been affected by it, and it's a situation that is unhealthy for everybody, and it's not good for anybody. And in spite of all that, action had to be taken. And I think, reaching that level and talking to central office and their sensing my exasperation and anger and frustration and whatever feelings that [came] to the surface, that we had reached a stage where they couldn't not be involved and that the ATA was going to be involved as well, and we [might] eventually be before a Board of Reference.

Dissatisfaction With the Role of Central Office

Four of the respondents expressed significant concern and dissatisfaction with the role played by central office personnel during the process. They generally indicated that they felt that they had received little or no support from central office and that the problem had been dropped on them and then they were expected to do something. These feelings were probably exacerbated by the fact that in three of the cases, known 'problem teachers' had been transferred to their school, and then they were expected to do something about the problem:

> Ken. *It became evident that, like I said before, I didn't think the district had the heart to go after him, not because they really liked him or anything; you know how it is. It's a long, drawn-out, protracted, ugly, tiresome thing, and it didn't look like they were prepared to do it. . . . Not that they weren't supportive, but basically they weren't going to do the big thing that they should have done, which was allow me to write enough reports that say, "Hey, he's out."*
>
> Ernie. *I guess the other thing that concerns me about the whole procedure was that I felt a little bit like I was put upon by the central office as well as having to deal with it as the administrator in the school. He had been here a year, and then we had this massive evaluation that was introduced into the whole division. When they did our school he was one of the ones that, like I said, was identified that needed to do some work on some things. Then after he'd gone through that process and the complaints continued, there was considerable pressure on me from the central office to do something about him, and I had real reservations about whose problem he really was because of the way in which he arrived on the staff. . . . So I think that was the thing that disturbed me the most about the whole procedure.*

Ernie was even more upset with the handling of the second case with which he was involved:

> Ernie 2. *I was a little stressed that I got the reaction from the superintendency that I was causing them problems with it, and of course I had the feeling that it was the other way around. I would have preferred when they received the petition that, rather than them taking the bull by the horns, they'd bring it over to me first, but of course they didn't do that.*

Frank faulted central office for not investigation and utilizing all possible avenues to help a teacher in trouble:

> Frank. *We were not given an opportunity or any invitation to do transfers within the school system, which is another whole avenue that we need to talk about or explore, and in a sense—and I fault central office for this as much as anybody—the person was kind of just left to flounder in an area that he just couldn't handle.*

The most vehement and in-depth response about the role played by central office personnel was offered—not coincidentally, I suspect—by the respondent who spent five years trying to change, then terminate, a teacher who he considered to be morally and ethically unfit for the classroom:

> Craig. *Throughout all of these incidences I was filing reports of concern, which the superintendent would not accept without a response and rebuttal from the teacher. In other words, the accused must have a chance to respond to the accuser. If there were discrepancies between the accused's and the accuser's story, the superintendent would not accept the letter until such time as both parties agreed to all the facts, and the difficulty I experienced was getting facts. I did indicate what I would consider to be the facts, and while most of the facts were not refuted by the individual, they were contested; they were told that I had sort of convoluted the facts, and all the rest of it. And so the superintendent was not doing very much to assist us in dealing with this problem, and the end result is, I guess, a further erosion of trust on anyone's part as relates to this, and a suspicion on both our parts that we were now in the middle of some serious problems.*
>
> *I had asked my superintendent one time if I could indicate to the individual being documented that we were documenting for the purposes of possible termination action, and the response I had from my superintendent is, "You can't give any kind of indication other than we are trying to be helpful, trying to be guiding, and putting into place guiding principles that would help this person become a better teacher."*
>
> *In the meantime this particular teacher became rather concerned that in actual fact he was probably on some pretty shaky ground and proceeded to pull out all the previous documentation and was now starting to write five- and ten-page rebuttals on all the documentation that he had received in the preceding three or four years, and sent them to the superintendent, with carbon copies to myself. What happened from there, the tables got turned, and I was being asked by my superintendent to justify my letters and memos and facts. So for a period of about one year I was on the hotseat defending the actions that I was taking with this particular individual.*
>
> *I guess where my annoyance is is at a central office level, where we were dealing with pretty difficult issues on a regular basis,*

and they were sort of being thrown back at us, and [we were] being asked to "Substantiate, further investigate, corroborate your facts with the accused," and so forth. And I used to meet with the superintendent and say, "If I robbed a bank and was asked by the judge if I robbed the bank, I'd be a bloody fool to say 'Yes, I did,' especially if I knew that if I said 'No, I didn't,' the judge would never sentence me." And that was my sentiment about central office involvement, is that all you had to do was deny all the allegations, and they appeared to feel boxed. So I think what could have been handled earlier by central office, more succinctly by central office, and wasn't, caused the frustration on the part of the accused to actually have to get help because it was not a problem that was going away.

I became angry with central office, their rather blasé interest in becoming involved in what was shaping up to be a pretty dirty situation.

I'm still adamantly opposed and annoyed by the way central office handled the situation. I think my paperwork has probably become a little bit better as a result of it, out of necessity, but I also came from a school jurisdiction before arriving here where some of the documentation that I submitted to central office in the early stages in my previous jurisdiction would have been jumped all over by central office personnel, and they would have come in on their galloping white horses to see what kind of assistance they could be to remedy, resolve, or perhaps terminate the individuals. And I just felt like I was left hanging for an awful long time, and in those five years an awful lot of kids were negatively affected that didn't need to be.

Relationship With Their Professional Association

Satisfaction

One respondent expressed satisfaction with, and an understanding of, the role played by the ATA:

> Tom. *I really believe that the ATA is most supportive of seeing incompetent people removed, and their only involvement is that they want to make sure that the teacher is being treated fairly, and if you've done your homework and you've given this person as many opportunities and it's all documented, I don't think you'll have a problem. The key to all of this is documenting very precisely all the events that take place.*

In this case Tom was dealing with a case where the ATA, after becoming involved, had recommended to the teacher that he resign immediately, which he did. This teacher was later charged with and

convicted of unprofessional conduct. This case was clearly the exception among the respondents' experiences and, when push came to shove, focused on a specific instance of unprofessional conduct, not the long history of marginal/incompetent teaching which had preceded this incident.

Dissatisfaction

The other four respondents who commented on the role of the ATA were almost unanimous in their concern about the role played by the ATA in specific cases:

> Ken. *I know that the fellow that he had come into the meeting was moderate, and although he didn't take a side, he was doing the ATA thing for him, I felt, which is that we have to practically self-immolate ourselves to prove that this guy might actually have a problem, right? And five years down the road I'm worn out and he's still here.*
>
> Craig. *I was annoyed by the ATA's involvement initially because I was quite convinced I had dotted all my i's and crossed all my t's, and I had this guy dead to rights in terms of not doing a good job. And through the process of challenging me and my motives and my evaluation practices and standards and so forth, I for a period of time was on the hotseat rather than the accused, and that annoyed me greatly.*

suspicious about the ATA's motives and loyalties:

> Ken. [sought advice from ATA] *Yes, he was [helpful]. And I don't know if he did it because he knew the other guy too, and the other guy had this history of being sort of an aggravating character. Just, he was. So I don't know if that's part of it. I have been very active in the association, . . . so I know a lot of those people, so maybe there was some courtesy there. But I still believe that, had push come to shove, they would have had lawyers here, and if I [had] made one mistake in my report, that would have been it. It's like when a guy's found not guilty on a technicality, but you know he's guilty. I mean, it's stupid, right? So I don't know if he did what I needed to have happen.*

and even more articulate in their dissatisfaction with the perceived role that the ATA plays in any attempt to dismiss a teacher:

Ken. *I believe that, truthfully, the ATA is its own worst enemy when it comes to these kinds of situations. I think they profess that they don't tolerate or accept incompetent teachers, but I think they go far further than they need to when protecting a teacher, because, yes, I think teachers need some protection, and that's the role of that association, but I think even when they see a big problem, it seems like they don't want to admit it, and they're not going to let it happen. And I think they put people through far more hoops than they need to or should, and therefore I think a lot of the grief needs to fall on them, and they'd better wake up, and I think that's what we've got to—soon you're going to see more and more people less tolerant and understanding of the ATA. Besides the union thing, just that business of the teacher—when a system has seen and there's a history of incompetence, and you document it and you still have to fight, and you as the documenter are almost torn apart, because you're wrong, the teacher had to be not wrong—you know what I'm saying. The association, I believe, had better smarten up, because it's just going to be taken out of their hands; and maybe it should be, because as time goes on and schools change and we have more of this local authority, people aren't going to give two hoots in Hades about the ATA. I mean, if you asked anybody in this town they wouldn't. Teachers might, but so what? At some point I think the world's going to change, and they've done it to themselves. And I'm not saying it's a witch hunt and we have to hang ten teachers a year, but I think anybody who's been in this game long enough and sees what people have gone through trying to demonstrate their case when the case was good—uh-uh, something's definitely wrong there.*

Frank. *Having watched a number of my colleagues go through the dismissal procedure with the Board of Reference hearings and the ATA lawyers and so on, they just were so overwhelmed by it all. They confided that they would never ever attempt to dismiss another teacher because it was just too stressful on themselves, the procedure was, so they said that they would live with a bad teacher rather than go through this procedure. So having that kind of in the back of my mind, that I didn't want to get into a Board of Reference hearing and tackling the ATA lawyers and so on.*

I have either got cynical or I'm now jaded in this particular area of protecting teachers that are incompetent, and maybe that's just the administration coming out on me, but my frank comments are that the ATA should not interfere with the dismissal of a teacher. I realize that overzealous principals could just start randomly selecting people out if a teacher's been giving you a bad time and dismiss them, and that's possible. But I just in my heart don't believe that that is going to happen. And I think that they just make it so difficult that what they're really doing is, they're protecting incompetent teachers, and the kids are being cheated because of it. That's my biggest knock on the ATA. Let's get our heads out of this. We have people that in some cases have burned out, in some cases never even got lit up, and yet they're there with tenure. I just think it's deplorable. If we can't police ourselves, then somebody else is going to have to come along and do it.

. . . What we need are the best teachers we can get, and we cannot afford to have incompetent teachers. And if you decide to protect incompetent teachers, you will rue the day. And I think the ATA has to recognize that, and they have to, yes, protect teachers, but they don't have to throw so many roadblocks in front of it that most administrators, certainly the ones I know, won't even consider that as an option any more because in the end they feel like they're *the ones that have been on trial.*

James. *I don't think that the ATA represents administrators very well if it does. At one time they talked about maybe administrators making it separate, some sort of distinction between administrators and teachers, and I would be in favor of that; of course, a lot of people wouldn't, but I sure would. Yes, I have some ideas about that. I've phoned the ATA to get advice on how to handle a certain dispute I may have with a teacher after finding out that they had phoned them, and I feel if they're at the point where they need advice or assistance from someone at the ATA in discussions that we're having, then I feel I should be able to look for the same. Some of the advice that I've received from them was strange, I guess; it's not advice I would follow.*

I have maybe some opinions about that, and they may be a little offbeat, but yes, some strong opinions on that. I think that the ATA protects the incompetent teachers, and I think people in the community, some people in the province, know who they are, and when the community and people in general see this happening, I think it devalues all teachers when you see this happening . . . in a lot of schools and a lot of small schools all over the place, where the community, the teaching staff, the administration all know that the teacher there is not performing at a satisfactory level, and there seems to be little that you can do about it. And I've talked to, again, other principals to find out what strategies they use, and basically it's the same. . . . And when that fails, if that fails—and a lot of times that does fail. Why does it fail? I guess because a lot of teachers know that the ATA will support them almost to the point where I feel it's being ridiculous, where if you didn't rape or murder someone in the last little while, you're okay. And so it becomes a game, and some teachers have been retired on the job for a number of years, and this seems to be, although they may not be doing anything wrong, they're doing very little right, and as long as that's happening, as long as you're not doing a whole lot wrong, it's very difficult to remove them.

Maybe this is a narrow view, because I'm not saying that teachers don't have rights and shouldn't have rights and shouldn't have someone representing them, but it just looks like the ATA is more self-serving when they're seen as a group that will protect teachers, and I should think that they would be more as a group that would look after education and the interests of students too, as education as a whole and not simply—I'm not saying they don't do things in education as a whole, but it seems to me that they're viewed by people in general as they are to protect teachers.

I live in this community, my children go to high school here, I talk to parents, and they say, "Well, this teacher's a rotten teacher

and shouldn't be teaching. They've been a teacher for twenty years, and the worst teacher." And you know they are, and you feel like saying, "Well, yes, they are," and yet you don't, you can't; that's not ethical. So you know it's out there, but you know that it being out there reflects negatively on you too, because it reflects on your profession, so if we're saying we're allowing teachers that are less than competent to remain there teaching, we're saying it's okay to do so; you don't really have to be all that competent to be a teacher. And I think that the ATA, when they're doing that, is really doing more damage to the profession than they are good.

The emotion displayed by the respondents and the strength of their suspicion about the role and motives of the ATA are dramatic. This may be a case where facts matter not. Even if the respondents are wrong in their suspicions and feelings (which I do not believe they are), they quite possibly represent the views of many more school principals. Principals who are ATA members, who pay ATA dues, should be able to get representation from the ATA, but obviously these respondents are convinced that their association is not working for them, but rather is working in direct opposition to their best efforts to do what is right for students and to protect and improve the image of the teaching profession. Once again, right or wrong, the ATA must address this perception and work to change its image with principals or face the possibility that, when the public/government broaches the idea of splitting administrators from the ATA, some administrators will support or even welcome the idea.

THEMES

The data categories and subcategories identified through the analysis of the data are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Data Categories and Subcategories

Category	Subcategory	Sub-subcategory	Sub-sub-subcategory
Coming to understand the problem	Information from parents		
	Student transfers and dropouts		
	Other ways		
Causes for concern	Discipline/classroom management		
	Rapport with students, colleagues, parents		
	Teaching effectiveness	Lesson planning	
		Student achievement	
		Grading practices	
		Teaching techniques	
	Identifying the problem	Inability of teacher to identify personal role in the problem	
		Personal qualities	Laziness
			Ego or insecurity?
			Volatility
			Physical characteristics
			Personal and family problems
		Poor morals and ethics	
Responding to the problem: Initial steps	Formative supervision		
	Summative evaluation		
	Changing assignment within the school		
Factors which shaped administrative responses	Complaints	Fear of damage to the personal/ professional reputation of principal	

(table continues)

Category	Subcategory	Sub-subcategory	Sub-sub-subcategory
		Relations with superiors jeopardized	
		School's effectiveness called into question	
		Sense of professional responsibility	
	Concerns based on formal and informal observations		
	Small school and/or rural community factor	Reputation	
		'Reputation' spreads to other communities	
		Staff dissension	
		Causing problems between the school and the community	
		Politicizing the process	
		Sense of duty to the community	
Confronting the problem	Intrasystem transfers		
	Inducing retirement (the positive approach)	Persistent revisiting of the issue	
	Inducing retirement (the coercive approach)	Application of internal pressure over time	
		Application of external pressure to leave the system	
	Dismissal unrelated to competency issues		
	Medical leave		
	Outside influences	Availability of alternate careers	
		Family considerations and availability of full pension	
Responses by the teacher	Stonewalling	Refusal to recognize that change was necessary	

(table continues)

Category	Subcategory	Sub-subcategory	Sub-sub-subcategory
		Use of extended medical leave to disrupt/delay process	
	Defending	Appeals to higher authorities or neutral third parties	
		Counterarguments	
		Counteroffensives/ aggressive action	
		Splitting the opposition	
		Appeals to professional principle	
	Capitulating		
	Negotiation and settlement		
Effects of the conflict	Effects on the principal	Anguish and self-doubt	
		Frustration	
		Anger	
		Guilt	
	Dissatisfaction with role of central office		
	Relationship with their professional association	Satisfaction	
		Dissatisfaction	

Although each data category is quite distinct, it is apparent that some general themes run through them. Further analysis for these cross-category threads revealed four themes: (a) an individual ethic of care, (b) an accretion of events, (c) the importance of being principled, and (d) the difficulty of the principal's role. The themes and subthemes are summarized in Table 4.

Individual Ethic of Care

The respondents clearly displayed a caring ethic through expressions of concern about the effects on both teachers and students. In addition, they expressed a need to serve and protect teachers, students, and the system.

Table 4

Themes and Subthemes

Theme	Subtheme	Sub-subtheme
Individual ethic of care	Concern for effects on the teacher	Standing in the school and community
		Personal and financial welfare
	Concern for effects on the students	Relationship with teacher
		Impact on student learning
	Serving and protecting	
Accretion of events	Concern about teaching competence	
	Development of a 'reputation'	
Importance of being principled	Treating the individual fairly	
	Recognizing the importance of representation and due process	Providing opportunity for improvement
	Respect for the individual vs. the group's interest	
Difficulty of the principal's role	Frustration	With the process
		With the teacher
		With central office
		With their professional association
	Personal effects	

Concern for Effects on the Teacher

Most respondents saw negative effects on the welfare of the teacher. These centered on the teacher's professional and personal standing in the school and community and the individual's personal and financial welfare.

Standing in the School and Community

> Ken. *More than once we ended up having some rather vigorous discussions that spilled over to the hallway so others knew what was happening, which was unfortunate.*
>
> *I also found—you know, it's one of those situations too after a while where all the staff—and when I say "all" I mean almost all . . .—are becoming sort of less than professional themselves, muttering about him all the time, because it was always, "Gee [mumbles], what are we going to do with him?"*

Ken's concern here was primarily with the teacher's professional and personal standing within the school and the negative impact the problems he was experiencing were having on that standing. He hinted at the possible spread to the community when he mentioned other teachers' less than professional conduct; however, his concern about the community perception of the teacher is very clear in the second case he discussed:

> Ken 2. *She really wasn't a miserable old so-and-so, but she wasn't as tolerant, as patient as I'm sure she was when she was thirty, and she was in her sixties.*

Tom was clearly concerned about the teacher's standing in the community:

> Tom. *I had no problem with accepting those complaints from parents. But as the principal of the school, I felt obligated to defend the teacher too to some degree; I mean, I think that's the principal's job. If you can't defend the person, then I think you have to get rid of them; that's basically how I see things. So I tended to go to bat for this person.*

Personal and Financial Welfare

All respondents expressed concern for the personal welfare of the individual teacher:

> Ernie. *He essentially was burnt out by the time we got him. In all honesty, he needed to have gone into something else long before he got to that stage.*

Ernie 2. *I think, in terms of his own personal self, it took the pressure off him. He didn't feel like he was under public scrutiny all along. So I think it served a useful purpose that way.*

Tom. *I kept hoping that I could get this person turned around.*

But two of the respondents were especially detailed with their concern, probably because the teachers involved in both cases had worked and lived in their respective communities for long periods of time. In each case there also appears to be an element of guilt, of trying to convince themselves that what they did and what finally happened was really what was best for the teacher:

Ken 2. *She was actually a really nice lady, but her time had come and gone. You hate to say that about somebody, but in her case it had.*

So we wondered what we were going to do. And she had worked hard, because she had gone back, she got her degree and everything, so you didn't really want to push. She had lived a long time in this community.

I went and opened the lines with the people and contacted Barnett House for her, and she took her retirement. She did not leave bitter; at least it wasn't bitter. I think she left sad, because this was her whole life for how many years? I felt the community didn't treat her well, because she'd taught here, I think, thirty-seven years; I mean, a long time.

She gave her own retirement party, and half the staff didn't even come. I came; I went, of course. And I still see—I think not too long afterwards she was glad she made that step, but it's admitting that you can't do it any more.

Frank. . . .*to have it happen in an amiable sort of way. . . . He was admitting that he was feeling better and his headaches had gone away and that he felt better about himself and that he wasn't bitter that we'd done what we had done and that it was really a godsend that we had done that [forced to half time].*

. . . In the end he did sign off and resign, and to this day he comes in and sees me two or three times a year and couldn't be happier or friendlier and has thanked me many times for edging him out. And even though he didn't want to, it worked out as a win-win situation for both of us.

. . . You have to handle these things firmly but with a certain amount of common sense and dignity too.

The financial welfare of the teacher was identified as a concern by most respondents. The concern ranged from a recognition of the difficulty of the decision as it related to pension entitlement:

> Ernie. *That's, of course, a difficult decision to make when you've got schedule and lots invested in a pension plan.*

to a concern for basic financial solvency:

> Ken. *For some reason he saw that there was enough money in it, and he took his time.*
>
> Craig. *This individual's got a family, he's got his own kids, he's got to pay his own bills.*

to recognition that offering career alternatives was important:

> Frank. *I said, "If you would like to contract some of the services for testing and so on . . . ." I'd already had prior approval from the superintendent, and he was really happy about it because he was starting to establish a clientele in his private little practice, and now here's an opportunity to break in with the school and get some contract work.*

Concern for Effects on the Students

The concern expressed by Craig that it was necessary *"to ensure that this guy wasn't working with kids"* was expressed by other respondents as well. They expressed concern about the teacher's relations with students and the impact on student learning.

Relationship With the Teacher

The concerns expressed by the respondents relating to the teacher's relationship with students varied depending upon the grade level of the student and the teacher's specific job assignment. For principals in an elementary setting, Ken best expressed the relationship between a lack of patience (a cause of the problem) and the resulting instilling of fear in children:

> Ken. . . . *the central problem being, he was somewhat impatient with children.*
>
> Ken 2. *She certainly had a lot of kids scared, and you know what we're talking about [laughs]. I mean, she was a firebrand, right?*

Frank's concern focused on the problems that the teacher's lack of rapport with students created for the delivery of guidance and counselling services:

> Frank. *The girls tended not to go to him with their problems, and in junior high, naturally we had lots of problems that we needed expert advice in terms of how to deal with their emotional problems and so on, and he was not very effective in the guidance.*

Ernie clearly expressed the concern of secondary principals:

> Ernie. *When we had a problem, he'd blow it all out of proportion, and he would get himself worked up into the stage where he was absolutely unreasonable. And of course, with a high school kid, if you are absolutely unreasonable, so are they, and so we had a significant number of ugly interactions with him.*
>
> *The ones that bothered me the most, though, were actually the confrontations with the students. There was a sense always from him that the student had to be removed or he wasn't getting the support he needed. There was no sort of chance to cool off and what's best for everybody sort of thing. He was fairly adamant that we had to provide the support for him or he couldn't live with the situation. . . . Part of the problem that I had with him was that my solutions didn't satisfy him. He and I were at logger heads on several of those kinds of issues, several times.*

Each of these areas of concern involved an immediate effect—students being fearful, not accessing counselling services, confrontations between students and teachers—but also a potential long-term impact on the students' outlook towards school and hence their academic success and, in the case of the counselling situation, a whole raft of consequences that could arise from unresolved personal problems. In addition to these potential long-term impacts, the respondents specifically identified concerns about the long-term impact on student learning that having a less than totally competent teacher might cause.

Impact on Student Learning

The respondents identified concerns related to both the immediate and the long-term consequences to student learning. This concern was previously identified as an issue in the data category *Causes for Concern,* with Ken citing his concern for the teaching of reading to Grade 2 students by a teacher who was virtually deaf and Ernie raising the issue of students who would use being in a specific teacher's class as a reason for not knowing anything the following year.

Don expressed concern about the immediate impact that a negative classroom atmosphere had on subsequent classes:

> Don. *It wasn't so much that they were concerned about the skills that the students were bringing to them, but more of the attitude and behavior that they were learning in that particularly class transferring over to the next class: the unhappiness of the students as they came into the next classes, and then as a result their unwillingness to work for the next person.*

The concern about future academic achievement is clearly implied in Ernie's statement about his second case:

> Ernie 2. *We've changed his assignments so that he's dealing largely with the new students—Grade 10s—and in some of the CTS areas, so he's not in the heavy academic sciences like he was.*

Ernie's statement clearly expresses concern about future student achievement in the academic sciences but also implies a willingness on his part to sacrifice the Grade 10s and CTS students to save the academic sciences. This concept of being forced to decide where the least harm will be done by the marginal or incompetent teacher was clearly expressed by James:

> James. *What we're left to do, or the best we can do, is put them in a place where they can do the least amount of damage, so you'll see your teacher-librarians, you'll see your—and this may be awful—but your small groups, your fine arts, your other-than-core subjects, your Agriculture 10 students and that kind of thing probably, but you may*

have a teacher that's put there because that's what's likely to be the least amount of damage. Rather than being in a situation where you can arrange things to maximize the learning for the [greatest number] of students, you're put in a position where you're trying to minimize the damage to the minimum [number] of students.

Serving and Protecting (Altruism)

The frustration expressed by James when he spoke of making choices not to maximize student learning, but rather to minimize the damage, echoes throughout my discussions with the respondents. The respondents clearly identified their desire to serve and protect the best interests of their students:

> Frank. *From an administrative point of view we saw that as a gain in the sense that he wasn't having classes come apart if he was in his guidance office working with students.*
>
> James. *I'm not happy with the kinds of things that I as an administrator have to go through to do something about an incompetent teacher. I think if we're here to serve students, and the needs of the students are paramount, then I think that has to be their needs that are paramount and not the teachers' needs.*

The intensity of the respondents' feelings about their concern for students and the need to act to protect student interests is best summarized by the following statements by my last respondent:

> Craig. *I guess there became sort of a bulldog attitude that, damn it, this guy's not good for kids. I've been put in this position, and as a result of him not being good for kids, I was placed here to do a job, and while it's pretty dirty and pretty messy and it's probably one I would rather not take on, I had a responsibility that now it's time to roll up my sleeves, and if he wants to play dirty, I guess I've got to play dirty. I've got to get all my i's dotted and my t's crossed and do what I can through appropriate channels to minimize his contact with kids. And in my mind at that point in time I saw myself being determined that this gentleman had to be out of my school, perhaps out of the system, perhaps out of education; and while I couldn't control a lot of that, I could perhaps control him being out of my school.*
>
> *I think somewhere along all this, my emotions in all this were reflected to central office, and they realized that they were into it as deep as I was, and they recognized that action had to be taken, and*

> *they had a role to play in taking action as well to ensure that this guy wasn't working with kids.*
>
> *. . . In those five years an awful lot of kids were negatively affected that didn't need to be.*

One must ask why concern for student welfare does not figure prominently in the literature. Is it because it is assumed to exist and is therefore not expressed? Was it not expressed by the respondents in previous studies? Or was it not seen as being important by the researchers? These questions will be addressed in the *Discussion* chapter.

It is clear that the respondents wanted, and actively worked to find, a resolution to the situation that would serve the best interests of the students, the teacher, and the system and expressed satisfaction when this was possible:

> Ken. *The district didn't exactly follow its policy, but they had an escape clause in there that said that they could make whatever arrangements would be necessary to achieve one of these if it was in the best interests of all parties, and it sure was.*

> Frank. *[He] has thanked me many times for edging him out, and even though he didn't want to, it worked out as a win-win situation for both of us.*
>
> *I just kept looking at what this person was doing to our program and to our children, and so that kind of blunted any bad feelings that I might have had, so I just kept focusing on the good that was going to come out of this in the end.*

> Ernie. *In actual fact, in terms of the final outcome, I think it was fair to him and fair to us. He left voluntarily on his own accord, and he didn't make any fuss about how he was being treated. His concern was whether or not there was enough money there for him to financially be able to handle the difference that it was going to make in his pension and so on. So it was much more pleasant in the sense that at least we were working with the same aims.*

Accretion of Events

The need to force a resignation was usually not occasioned by one climactic event, but rather by an accretion, over a long time, of a series of isolated (often similar) problems/events. Tom summarized this accretion of events simply by saying that the teacher demonstrated *"poor judgement on many occasions."*

Concern About Teaching Competence

The respondents became aware of concerns about the teaching competence of the teacher through parent and student complaints, personal observations, and information from central office personnel and from principals who had previously had the teacher on staff. In all cases they found that there was a history of marginal or incompetent performance.

Through discussions with central office personnel and the former principal, Ken found that

> Ken. . . . *prior to coming to this school there had been problems as well; and nothing changed, nothing got better; nothing was going to change, nothing was going to get better. . . . [Further, nobody] had ever documented everything. They'd danced around and thought, Well, this guy's a problem. And the principal sort of talked to him or mentioned something, but nothing ever happened.*

After receiving numerous complaints from students and parents, Craig initiated an evaluation of the teacher and identified several concerns. As part of the evaluation process, Craig sought to identify whether these were new problems or recurrences of previous problems. He found that the teacher *"had been transferred from location to location until he ended up at this particular school."*

Tom, on the other hand, hired the teacher right out of university and had made the decision that, even though there were some problems, the

creativity and enthusiasm of the teacher were assets that made it worthwhile working with the teacher to improve on his instructional and planning weaknesses. As time passed Tom found that he had to *"on two or three occasions . . . [talk] . . . to this person about the types of things that he would be discussing in the classroom."*

Further, Tom came to question his initial belief in the potential for this teacher to overcome his weaknesses and become a competent professional. He found that

> Tom. . . . *it got to the point where I had to see his lesson plans on a daily basis; then I got it on a weekly basis, and the vice-principal and I looked at these plans so that we could see what was going on."*

It appears that there was a point where there was a decision, conscious or unconscious, to ignore the problem. When this did nothing to resolve the issue, the process of supervision and evaluation, of remediation plans and discussions of areas in need of improvement was initiated. The usual result was failure. This was best summarized by Frank: *"Days turned into weeks, and the weeks turned into years, and so we limped along with a teacher who was not cut out, in my mind, to be a junior high teacher."*

It is obvious from the respondents' comments that a number of sources and categories of information usually combined to create the critical mass that moved the respondents to act.

Development of a 'Reputation'

Five of the seven respondents identified the development of a negative reputation in the community as a source of pressure to act. This reputational factor also mitigated against the use of intrasystem transfers

because, as Ken said, *"chances of transferring him elsewhere were slim to none because I'm sure the story's out; that's just the way it is."*

The Importance of Being Principled

In addition to expressing concern for the welfare of students and the teacher, the respondents expressed a concern for justice and fairness. These concerns were expressed variously as a concern for the individual and acceptance of the necessity to treat him/her fairly, as a recognition of the importance of due process and representation and of providing the opportunity for improvement, and as an acknowledgment of the need to find a solution that would best serve the interests of everyone involved.

Treating the Individual Fairly

The respondents all expressed a desire to ensure that the individual was treated fairly. Two of the respondents even agreed to accept a teacher onto their staff who had experienced problems at a previous school:

> Ken. *I was told, "He's got to have a job, and you're having him." And I thought at first maybe, How bad could it be? Well, I found out: bad. In his case I kept putting it off because I thought he might change, because I wasn't trying to be a miserable so-and-so.*

> Ernie. *We agreed to have him here because he had been an employee of the district for twenty years and was approaching his thirtieth year of experience.*

Unfortunately, in both cases the teachers continued to experience problems, and Ken and Ernie had to deal with these problems.

Recognizing the Importance of Representation and Due Process

The respondents accepted the need for representation and respected the need for due process, although they tended to find it frustrating and disruptive:

> Ken. *It got to the point where something definitely had to happen, so I requested a meeting with him, and at the meeting he insisted he have a third party there, so he had a co-worker from staff who was a strong ATA person at the meeting, and that was fine.*
>
> Tom. *The ATA became involved, naturally, because the teacher had to have somebody there to represent him.*
>
> Craig. *In a few meetings he asked for our ATA rep from the school to sit in the meetings only so that anything he said would not come back to him in another convoluted form. After two meetings with the ATA rep, the ATA rep indicated to me that he didn't want to come in any more, and so any meetings we had were basically the teacher, myself, and usually one of my vice-principals sat in as an observer.*
>
> *Amidst all of this documentation, this particular teacher approached ATA Legal Services and accused me of harassment. ATA Legal Services came in and met with me to find out what the circumstances were surrounding it.*

In one case where the impetus to take action came from the *board* and central office, the principal tried to play a mediating role:

> Ernie 2. *I sat in with the superintendency in the process of negotiations, and I think I felt that I was reasonably supportive to both parties.*

Providing the Opportunity for Improvement

The respondents were clear in their recognition that the teacher needed to be afforded the time and opportunity to change and improve:

> Ken. *When he first came here—it's one of those things where the district gave him the contract, figuring, aw, well, it'll get better. . . . And it's probably happened to all of us, right? You see somebody with a few little problems, you think, aw, well, you'll counsel him and then it'll get better.*
>
> *I never came right down and said, "You're out of here." He did accuse me of that in a meeting, but my whole mission was to get him out of teaching, and I said, "Nothing could be further from the truth.*

What we need is some change here. Recognize that there's something that needs to be changed."

Tom. *But something you also have to understand is that sometimes when discipline isn't that great, there's a lot of creative things going on, and I knew that because this teacher was very creative, and lots of good things did happen. So I always had to try and weigh: Did the good things outweigh some of the things that weren't to my liking? That's where I was kind of caught in a bind.*

I think that in any of these cases you attempt as an administrator to try and help a teacher. In other words, "Let's make improvements here," and you give them all the guidance you can, you give them suggestions, you help them get their planning done, all these kinds of things. And if things don't improve, then you have no choice but to start writing these things up, saying, "This is what's happening."

I kept hoping that, this guy's got a lot of talent, he's got lots of creative things, and he can be a very good teacher, and we've got to try and help this person.

Frank clearly believed that opportunities for change should not necessarily be the responsibility only of the teacher and the school, but that the system should also play a role:

Frank. *I guess the only thing I would say is that one thing a system should look at is to allow more transferring around of the teachers within the systems to give people a fresh start and a new outlook on life. I don't think it has to always be termination.*

Ironically, Frank's suggestion of intrasystem transfers was what had created Ken's and Ernie's problems. Despite the failure of a change in schools to solve the problem in these two cases, Frank's suggestion has merit and could be used under controlled circumstances with appropriate central office support.

It appears clear to me that the respondents spent considerable time and thought anguishing about whether they should act and, if so, what form the actions should take. I believe that in each case they sought a course of action that would show respect and consideration for the individual teacher while protecting the interests of students and the school system. It is this balancing act which makes the role of the principal in this type of situation

particularly difficult because the role is ambiguous and the principal has little power or authority to bring the situation to a resolution.

The Difficulty of the Principal's Role

The sources of frustration experienced and expressed by the respondents were many and varied, including frustration with the process itself, the role of the teacher, the role played by central office, the role played by the ATA, and the personal stress to which the process subjected them.

Frustration

With the Process

The respondents expressed frustration with the entire process of evaluating teachers and trying to move to a resolution of the problem. The literature suggested that incompetency or marginality is a concept without precise technical meaning. This lack of precision leaves principals dealing with an incompetent or marginal teacher searching for criteria with which to judge teachers' performance, especially those that will withstand judicial review. The accepted concept that incompetence involves a pattern of recurring instances (identified as a theme, *Accretion of Events,* in this study) adds to the frustration, because the principals found that the time involved in making the determination results in increased numbers of students being placed at educational risk. The respondents further expressed frustration with a process of resolving the problem that they saw as being heavily weighted against their efforts to protect the best interests of students and in favor of the teachers' continued employment.

With the Teacher

The actions, or inaction, of the teachers was also cited as a source of frustration. This frustration was caused by the teachers' apparent inability to realize that they had a problem, their refusal or inability to take action to help themselves and save their careers, and actions taken by the teachers which disrupted and lengthened the evaluation process.

With Central Office

The role played by central office was a source of frustration, ironically, because, depending on the situation, there was too little or too much central office involvement. Craig expressed frustration at what he viewed as a total lack of appropriate moral support from his central office during much of the five years he was attempting to resolve his problem. He clearly felt that he did not receive the kind of support he needed and expressed the feeling that his central office staff had put *him* on trial by its actions rather than the teacher. He further suggested that he would have received far more support from his previous jurisdiction's central office.

Ken expressed frustration with the apparent unwillingness of central office to take action to deal with the teacher he discussed in his first case, suggesting that central office hoped the teacher would just go away. Ken realized that that was not going to happen and initiated the process that led to the teacher's eventually accepting a modified early-retirement package. He conceded that when the time came to act after he had done the initial legwork, central office personnel supported his efforts when the situation reached the *board* level for final disposition.

Ernie was frustrated by his dealings with central office in both of the cases with which he was involved. In the first case he felt that central office

personnel had dumped a problem on him, then treated him as though it was his problem, to the point where he felt that they were starting to act as though they thought *he* was the problem. In his second case central office took the initiative to try to force the teacher to resign, retire, transfer, or take a sabbatical after the board had received a petition from the community. In this case he felt that they had handled the situation badly, that they should have involved him in trying to resolve the situation, and had they done so, he might not have had to deal with a virtual staff revolt. I believe that his frustration was further deepened by the fact that the second teacher remained on staff, whereas the first teacher, through Ernie's efforts, eventually decided to accept an early-retirement package.

In each case except the last one, the respondent eventually received support from central office, which led to a negotiated retirement/resignation package. It is clear from the respondents' comments that they felt that more support at an earlier stage of the process would have expedited the situation and reduced the number of students hurt by their exposure to the teacher involved.

<u>With Their Professional Association</u>

The role, or perceived role, of the ATA in the process was also cited by the respondents as a major source of frustration. Two of the respondents were extremely eloquent in describing their frustration with the ATA. James saw the ATA as an enemy of education, dedicated to protecting teachers regardless of their competence and suitability for the profession. He joined with Ken in speculating that administrators might be better served by having a separate professional organization. Both expressed the belief that advice

offered to them as administrators by the ATA was of little value and that when push came to shove, the ATA would back the teacher.

Frank and Craig both expressed the view that if an attempted dismissal reached the Board of Reference stage, they would be the ones under attack and the ATA lawyers would be looking for technicalities—or, as Craig said, undotted i's and uncrossed t's—to discredit their efforts and ensure that the teacher retained his/her position.

Personal Effects

The respondents were clear and articulate on the negative effects that they felt as a result of being involved in this process. The anguish and self-doubt, frustration, anger, and guilt that the respondents felt are clearly identified in the data category *Effects on the Principal.*

These frustrations and stressors appear to exist in large part as a result of role ambiguity and a lack of real power/authority to act decisively to deal with the problem. Role ambiguity is a fact of life for school principals in Alberta, who are expected to be professional colleagues and instructional leaders, as well as to perform management functions including the evaluation of teachers, with the potential recommendation of termination of a colleague's contract of employment. This management function has evolved through changes in the School Act (1988) and school board policies and procedures over the past two decades. Section 15(h) of the School Act specifically states that the principal *must* "evaluate or provide for the evaluation of the teachers employed in the school." This devolution of responsibility for the evaluative function to school-level administration from the central office and provincial levels has occurred without any formal commensurate adjustments in the role of the principal. Until such

adjustments are made and accepted by all stakeholders, through practice, policy, or legislation, the stress caused by role ambiguity will continue.

CONCLUSION

The respondents in this study expressed concern for the welfare of students, for the welfare of the teacher, and for justice. They all indicated that a concern for the educational and emotional welfare and, in some cases, the physical well-being of students was a powerful motivator to action. The respondents were concerned that continued exposure to the marginal or incompetent teacher would affect the students' academic well-being. They went so far as to suggest that the teaching of reading to Grade 2 students by a teacher who was almost deaf was a joke. They also identified having been in a particular teacher's class the year before as an excuse used by students for not achieving the next year. In more extreme cases the respondents expressed concern for the physical safety and well-being of students as a result of inadequate supervision by the teacher or the teacher's propensity to use physical force on students. I believe that this concern for the welfare of students was the primary motivator for the respondents and that this concern was focused and the need for action was made apparent by complaints from parents and students.

Even as the respondents were acting out of concern for students, they continued to express concern for the welfare of the teacher and for justice. They worried about the teacher's financial and emotional welfare and his/her professional and personal standing in the school and the community. As the process continued, the respondents were concerned about fairness and justice and questioned their own motivation and actions.

The irreconcilability of these concerns created an emotional strain which the respondents found difficult to manage.

This individual ethic of concern resulted in the respondents' experiencing intrapersonal conflict, the other stressor identified by Johns (1988), because of the conflict between the positive and negative effects of removing the teacher. It appears that they handled this emotional stress by reminding themselves that their primary concern was, and must always be, the welfare of the students.

CHAPTER FIVE

REFLECTIONS ON THE DATA

This chapter is organized around the major data categories and themes found in the *Findings* chapter. Each data category and theme will be discussed to identify whether it supports or contradicts the literature, whether it is a new finding not previously found in the literature, and whether there are implications for professional practice or future research.

Data Categories

Coming to Understand the Problem

Townsend (1984) clearly indicated that supervisory observations and ratings are the most common form of teacher evaluation, a conclusion supported by Bridges (1992). Yet research has consistently shown that administrators do not devote extensive time to the supervisory function, a finding supported by Alberta Education's 1993 study that found that time to conduct evaluations was an issue with principals. This study found that in not one case was formal evaluation the first and primary method used by the respondents in ascertaining that there was a problem; other means of ascertaining that there was a problem were used in all 10 cases. If the respondents' experiences are indicative of the experience of other Alberta principals, it calls into serious question the validity of using scarce administrative time to conduct systematic, periodic teacher evaluations if, as this study found, the problems are identified through less formal and less time-consuming methods. Bridges identified complaints, surveys, and test results as other means used to identify the incompetent teacher.

Phillips (1994), in his survey of Alberta school superintendents, found that complaints from parents or students were the second most common method used to identify teachers whose performance was perceived to be unsatisfactory, with the most common means being supervisor ratings. In this study the principals identified parent complaints as the most common, a finding that is not inconsistent with Phillips' conclusion if one considers that the principal's reaction to complaints would often be to start a supervisory process, the results of which would be directed to the superintendent.

As previously stated, the respondents identified complaints from parents as the single most important source of information in alerting them to the existence of a problem. These parental complaints were supplemented in the high schools by student requests to drop classes or transfer to sections taught by a different teacher and in the non-high school settings by concern about student achievement, informal observations, and expressions of concern by non-administrative staff. In most high schools in Alberta the use of computer scheduling should allow the tracking of transfers and dropouts from courses. Principals would be advised to use this technology as one means of identifying problem areas to determine whether it is staff, curriculum, or improper student placement that is the cause. Given the current funding formula for high schools, it seems likely that administrators would make this a priority.

These findings are consistent with those in the literature with regard to agreement on the various sources of information and with Bridges' (1992) conclusion that "complaints signal that something may be radically wrong . . . [and] also represent a source of pressure on the administrator to deal with the poor performer" (p. 9). However, where Bridges found that supervisors in his study used complaints to supplement supervisory ratings,

my respondents tended to implement supervision and evaluation proceedings based on information from these sources, which clearly supports complaints as a "source of pressure" to act. This finding appears to be consistent with the findings of French (1994) and Phillips (1994), who both found that complaints from parents were often the factor which initiated action.

The ATA is vehemently opposed to complaints being used to initiate the evaluative process, but where does that leave principals? The new Quality Teaching Policy may make the use of this information more acceptable for initiating an evaluative process with an experienced teacher; however, the ongoing demand by the ATA that parents with concerns be identified will continue to inhibit the use of this source of information, at least in a formal sense. The importance of informal information is obvious from these interviews; we should therefore not neglect the studies of administration theorists and writers who have worked in this area.

The reputational factor identified as the overwhelmingly most important cause for concern is again evident in this category. The parent and student requests to drop classes or transfer to different sections was based on the teacher's reputation in the school and in the community. The teacher's reputation also played a role in parent complaints, which in some cases occurred before their child was even in the teacher's class.

These responses clearly identify information from informal and formal supervision/evaluation, concern about student achievement, and information from non-administrative staff as sources of information about possible concern; however, these were clearly far less significant than the information from parents and students. These sources of information would likely be considered as information at hand and could be used to initiate an

evaluation under the Quality Teaching Policy. There may be a gain in this because the reasons for initiating the evaluative process now could form part of the record, whereas in the past the record tended to start with the formal evaluation.

The question that must be raised is, "Can improvement in a specified area of weakness as identified in a remediation plan result in dramatic enough changes to override the reputation factor?" If the answer is no or probably not, then are we wasting our time, the system's resources, and the teacher's time by trying to implement a plan that cannot succeed in dealing with the real problem? In part this may be addressed by the Quality Teaching Policy, which differentiates between teachers new to the profession and experienced teachers. Certainly a new teacher should be able to be helped to overcome weakness before a 'reputation' is established. But does the new policy do anything to address the issue of the experienced teacher with an already established 'reputation'? It appears from personal experience and the experiences of my respondents that focusing on remediating specific problems tends not to be very productive when the teacher has a strong 'reputation' as a poor teacher.

Causes for Concern

Bridges (1992), Brieschke (1986), and Kelleher (1985) all agreed that *incompetence* is a poorly defined term. Fuhr (1990) attempted to define *marginality* but did so only in relation to incompetence, which he failed to define. Bridges attempted to define incompetence by identifying the six criteria used by administrators in his study to determine incompetence:

> (1) failure to maintain discipline; (2) failure to treat students properly; (3) failure to impart subject matter effectively; (4) failure to accept teaching advice from superiors; (5) failure to demonstrate mastery of

> the subject matter being taught; and (6) failure to produce the intended or desired results in the classroom. (p. 5)

The dominant cause for concern identified in the current study was the reputation of the teacher. This was not a criterion identified by Bridges (1992); it was alluded to but not pursued by Phillips (1994); and yet it was identified as the most important by five of the seven respondents in this study. The identification of reputation as a major cause for concern in this study may reflect the fact that this study focused on respondents from rural or small urban areas, whereas previous research may have focused on urban areas. The significance of the size of the school and the type of community in which the school is located will be examined further in the discussion of other data categories.

The dominant subcategory of causes for concern was classroom management, which is consistent with the findings in the literature. Classroom management was identified as a major concern by all respondents working in non-high school environments, but was not identified by either of the respondents working in high school environments. This distinction between the type of school environment was not identified in the literature, which suggests that the distinction did not exist in previous studies, that previous studies have used respondents from non-high school environments, or, more likely, that my findings are chance results.

The second subcategory identified in this study—rapport with students, colleagues, and parents—overlaps with Bridges' (1992) criterion of failing to treat students properly. The issue of rapport with colleagues and parents did not figure prominently in the literature, although French (1994) and Phillips (1994) identified this as a cause of concern. In these two cases the research methodology of interviewing principals/

superintendents may have facilitated identification of this concern. In the current study this finding may be the result of employing similar methodology and/or may, again, be the result of the nature of the schools and communities involved in this study, because this area of concern was identified by the three respondents from schools with the smallest staffs, located in the smallest communities. The importance of school and community size may emerge as a significant theme in this study.

The third subcategory—teaching effectiveness (lesson planning, student achievement, grading practices, and teaching techniques)—overlaps with Bridges' (1992) criterion of imparting subject matter and producing the desired results in the classroom. These concerns were also identified commonly in the literature as areas for inclusion in teacher-assistance plans. It is noteworthy that, although these areas are among those most commonly included in remediation plans, they were not the major causes of concern for the respondents.

Bridges (1992) identified failure to accept advice from superiors as one of six factors that contribute to teacher incompetence. It was not, however, initially identified as a cause of concern by my respondents. It did, nonetheless, become an issue with my respondents in the attempted remediation phase of the process. This leads one to wonder whether this should be included as a criterion of incompetence, as Bridges suggested, or whether it would fit better into Bridges' category of perceived causes of incompetence. The latter was strongly supported by my respondents, who clearly identified the teacher's inability, or unwillingness, to change as a perceived cause of his/her incompetence.

This raises two questions for the school principal: "How can a teacher be counselled/made to realize that he/she has a problem?" and "Can you

help someone who refuses to recognize that he/she has a problem?" It is accepted practice in counselling that the person has to want help before he/she can be helped; surely this principle is applicable to teachers in difficulty.

Bridges (1992) identified "failure to demonstrate mastery of the subject being taught" (p. 5) as one of his six criteria, but this received no support from my respondents. This may have been happenstance, perhaps the result of having only seven respondents discussing 10 teachers. It may also be an indication of the quality of the initial teacher-preparation programs or better initial teacher placement in positions for which they were prepared academically.

Bridges' (1992) and Kelleher's (1985) contentions that incompetence is a series of actions over time appears to have been clearly supported by my respondents. The pattern of recurring instances is evident not only in the school/assignment where the decision by the respondents to act was eventually reached, but was also clearly evident with teachers who transferred from one school to another, where, in the words of one respondent, "nothing got better."

Steinmetz (1985), writing in a business context, identified the causes of incompetence as having "three basic natures: managerial and organizational shortcomings, individual and personal shortcomings, and outside influences" (p. 2). These findings were echoed in the research on teacher incompetence, where Bridges (1992) summarized the issue: "The causes of the incompetent teacher's difficulties appear to be multi-faceted" (p. 10).

Perhaps not surprisingly, my respondents tended to focus their comments on this topic on what they perceived to be the teacher's

individual and personal shortcomings. The most commonly identified problem was the inability of the teacher to recognize his/her personal role in the problem, which usually manifested itself as a refusal to recognize that change was needed. Other manifestations included what was described as laziness, ego, emotional volatility, and physical characteristics that impaired job performance. These findings are consistent with those of Phillips (1994), Bridges (1992), Fuhr (1990), and Brieschke (1986), who summarized her findings by stating bluntly that teacher "ineptness, laziness, unpreparedness, or lack of commitment contributes to students' academic demise" (p. 239).

It appears to be vital that school principals identify relevant personal characteristics and develop strategies that take these into consideration. It is unlikely, if a situation were to go to the Board of Reference level, that these alone would be considered as grounds for dismissal; and, in fact, the use of these as part of the case might be turned to the teacher's advantage, especially in the case of physical characteristics and personal and family problems.

These perceived causes of incompetence pose a major problem for the supervisor and raise questions (for which there may be no answers), such as, How does one remediate 'ego'? Can 'emotional volatility' be dealt with through counselling? What action can you take that does not violate human rights legislation with a teacher who is unsuited for the position because of physical characteristics? And perhaps most important, can you help someone who refuses to acknowledge that he/she has a problem? With the exception of 'laziness,' which could be remediated by clearly defining specific and explicit performance expectations that must be achieved to ensure continued employment, the areas outlined tend to defy technical

definition and hence technical remediation. This findings calls into question the acceptance of "teaching as technical expertise" and the entire body of teacher evaluation and supervision literature that has relied on this definition. It is clearly easier to remediate and, if remediation fails, to terminate employment for technical incompetence than it is for personal shortcomings. Ken's comment that *"those problems with his teaching were there long before any of that [personal and family problems]"* points to the fact that there is considerable confusion as to the causes and symptoms of unsuitability for teaching. This is an issue that should be addressed in future research.

The role of outside influences has been clearly documented in the literature by Townsend (1984), Steinmetz (1985), Jevne and Zingle (1991), and Bridges (1992). These outside influences include health concerns; stress; burnout; emotional distress; alcoholism and other substance-abuse problems; and family, marital, and financial difficulties. Only two respondents indicated that outside problems were a possible contributing factor, with the problems being identified as stress, possibly caused by family problems, and alcoholism, or at least a drinking problem. A third respondent identified some possible causes but rejected them as causes for incompetency by indicating that the problems with the teacher's teaching existed prior to the development of the outside problems. Not one of the other respondents was able to identify any outside problems that would have influenced the teacher's competency; had there been any, I believe that the respondents would have been aware of them, given the small staffs and small communities involved in the study.

The area of organizational and managerial shortcomings as a contributing factor in the teacher's incompetence was directly addressed by

only two respondents. One admitted to feeling guilty because teachers were not evaluated in the 1960s and 1970s, and the other implied that failure to evaluate rigorously when the teacher first started with the jurisdiction contributed to the problem. It could, however, be inferred from the lack of documentation available when the respondents began their supervision process that previous administrators had not done an appropriate job of supervision and evaluation. It is possible to draw the same inference about the administrators involved in transferring teachers who may have been less than competent from one school to another rather than dealing with the problem. This failure of previous administrators to document the problem and deal with it was identified as a major issue by French (1994).

Responding to the Problem: Initial Steps

Managerial responses to incompetent employees were identified by Stoeberl and Schneiderjans (1981), Kelleher (1985), Steinmetz (1985), Fuhr (1990), and Bridges (1992). All identified techniques that could be used to cope with the incompetent employee in education and business settings. Bridges identified and described the four types of administrative responses to incompetence as being tolerance and protection, salvage attempts, induced exits, and formal dismissal. In examining my respondents' stories, we shall see that their experiences were consistent with those described in the literature.

Bridges (1992) identified three specific techniques used in what he described as the tolerance and protection phase: "(a) transfer within and between schools, (b) placement in a 'kennel,' and (c) reassignment to nonteaching positions" (p. 31). Three of my respondents attempted to use transfers within their schools in an attempt to solve the problem. Ernie's

discussion of changing the teacher's timetable to take him out of academic courses and into elective courses—CTS in this case—is an exact match for the actions described by Bridges. James discussed at length the movement of incompetent or marginal teachers into areas such as special education, librarian, and elective courses, where they were dealing with small groups of students, thereby minimizing the damage.

The changing of assignments within the school was unsuccessful in each of these cases, and the question must be asked whether the change was made because the respondents really thought that it would be successful or whether it was a form of avoidance. Ken's comment that *"I kept putting it off because I thought, Well, he might change"* seems to support this conclusion, at least in his case.

The three previous respondents used changes of teaching assignments within the school as a possible solution, in each case unsuccessfully, which raises the issue of whether the internal transfer was a method of trying to avoid dealing directly with the problem. The following three respondents clearly identified situations where avoidance of the issue was used by central administration or previous principals. In each case the respondent subsequently had to address the issue and take action:

> Ken. *I don't think anybody had ever documented everything; they'd danced around and thought, Well, this guy's got a problem. And the principal sort of talked to him or mentioned something, but nothing ever happened.*
>
> Frank. *[He was introduced] into the counselling field, probably for all the wrong reasons. Even though he was trained as a guidance counsellor, he just did not have a good rapport with the kids, but it did take him out of the classroom; . . . I repeat, it did take him out of the room.*
>
> Craig. *As I find out later, he had been transferred from location to location until he ended up at this particular school.*

It is evident from these comments that avoidance of the issue through adjustments to teaching assignment or transfers did not solve the problem but merely shifted the responsibility for dealing with the problem to another administrator.

Four of the seven respondents ended up dealing with a teacher who had been transferred into their schools from another school in the jurisdiction after experiencing problems in the previous schools; in two of the four cases the teacher had also been transferred previously. These four cases emphasize the probable futility of trying to use intrasystem transfers to deal with the problem of a marginal or incompetent teacher. Although intrasystem transfers may in some cases allow an individual the opportunity for a new start, in these four cases all that happened was that the problem was transferred to a different school and a different administrator to handle. The experience of the respondents lends credence to Bridges' (1985) description of this transfer process as "the dance of the lemons" (p. 21). The use of transfers, lateral promotions, and 'working around' the problem employee was also discussed by Stoeberl and Schneiderjans (1981), Steinmetz (1985), and Brieschke (1986). Brieschke, in fact, found that of 76 teachers who had reached the stage where formal dismissal was possible, 73 were transferred.

Both the literature and the current study acknowledged that the use of internal and external transfers has the potential for being abused as a means for protecting and tolerating the incompetent or marginal teacher. It is important to remember that, used properly, both internal and external transfer can be valuable personnel-management techniques. The literature identified the value of transfers in reducing or eliminating the 'my supervisor and I had a conflict' defence for poor performance by placing the employee

in different work settings with different supervisors. Anderson (1991) supported the value of multiple supervisors but cautioned that "it is essential that the same benchmarks or criteria are used in each of the evaluation processes" (p. 172) to avoid confusing the teacher and to make the resulting evaluation reports comparable and defensible if the case goes to a Board of Reference.

Two of the respondents indicated that they felt that opportunities to transfer teachers to different schools with different grade levels could have resulted in the teacher being successful and saw the lack of opportunity to make such transfers as negative to both the teacher and the system. One of these respondents had the experience of needing to terminate a teacher who had been transferred from another school with a history of problems, so he was well aware that transfers were not a guaranteed answer but still wanted the opportunity to use transfers in cases where he felt that they might work. In this view he was supported by Anderson (1991), who concluded her remarks on transfers by stating that a changed assignment should not "be automatically ruled out when dealing with the marginal teacher" (p. 172).

None of the respondents used what Bridges (1992) described as placement in a 'kennel,' but reassignment to nonteaching positions was used in two cases. Frank and his predecessor as principal both used the counselling position in the school as a means by which to remove the teacher from the classroom. Ernie was able to use this approach for one semester, at the suggestion of the teacher's colleagues, who reworked their schedules so that the teacher could be a roving instructor/test developer/ laboratory assistant. It is clear from the respondents' stories that tolerance and protection were common responses to the problem employee.

The second type of managerial response, salvage attempts, was discussed as an alternative to toleration by Bridges and Grove (1984, 1990), Kelleher (1985), Steinmetz (1985), Brieschke (1986), Fuhr (1990), and Bridges (1992). In educational settings the salvage attempt is likely focused around interventions such as peer coaching, collaborative professional development, clinical supervision, or formative evaluation. The salvage attempts initiated by the respondents appeared to fall into the latter two categories.

Bridges' (1992) statement that "the salvage stage represents a period of unmuted criticism, defensive reaction, behavioral specification, limited assistance, restrained support, extensive documentation, and little improvement" (p. 48) could well have described the experience of Craig. Craig's experience seems to have met or fit every one of Bridges' descriptors of the salvage stage; other respondents did not necessarily go through the same process in the same depth, but they described variations of this process in each case. In ease case, the respondent's action fit with Bridges' contention that the salvage stage occurs after the decision to confront the poor performer is reached after a period of toleration. The respondents' experiences also support Bridges' conclusion that the salvage stage "produces little improvement among the veteran teachers who are identified as at risk" (p. 72), which brings into question the wisdom of current teacher-evaluation policies and the remediation plans that are required in many of these policies. Given the likelihood of these remediation plans failing, the administrator is faced with continuing to tolerate the poor performer or moving for dismissal. As we have seen previously, the greatest causes for concern identified by the respondents deal with the teacher's reputation and often centered on personal attributes such as rapport with

students, teachers, and the community which are difficult or impossible to address in a remediation plan. The plan may not address the real problem and probably will not result in the hard technical evidence demanded by a Board of Reference, making it relatively useless for achieving the objective of improving the teacher's performance or removing him/her from the system.

This likelihood that the remediation plan will fail and will not provide the evidence necessary for success at a Board of Reference leads us to the necessity of examining Bridges' (1992) third category of administrative response: induced exits. This response is at the heart of this study and will be dealt with in detail in subsequent sections of this chapter.

Bridges' (1992) fourth option, formal dismissal procedures, is clearly viewed in the literature as the last resort to be considered when salvage attempts and induced exits have failed. Bridges and Groves (1990) and Phillips (1994) found that dismissal is used infrequently with tenured teachers. Their findings are supported by the findings of this study, where seven respondents dealing with 10 problem teachers did not once make use of formal dismissal procedures. Bridges suggested that the infrequent use of dismissal is based on "the ambiguities inherent in teacher evaluation, the desire of administrators to avoid conflict and unpleasantness, the staff moral problems which are created unless the teacher is uniformly disliked by colleagues, and the laws governing dismissal" (p. 100). These conclusions were supported by my respondents and, in fact, identified another concern—the ATA. Their concerns about the ATA could fit within the desire to avoid conflict and unpleasantness and concerns about the laws governing dismissal but emerge as such a major concern that it will be dealt with in a subsequent section of this chapter.

Factors Which Shaped Administrative Responses

Motivation to act, or lack thereof, is a major factor in determining administrative responses to the incompetent teacher. The literature identified complaints from parents, students, and other teachers; financial and enrollment pressures; political and societal demands for educational reform; and moral and ethical considerations concerning the welfare of students as motivators to action. These are consistent with the findings of this study.

The primary motivators to action identified by the respondents were complaints from parents, especially in non-high school settings. At the high school level motivators to action also included complaints from students and the threat that students would transfer to other schools or take fewer courses, both of which have a financial impact on high schools under the current educational funding formula. The respondents were also motivated by moral and ethical concerns about the welfare of student; this was particularly evident in Craig's case, but concern for student welfare played a part in each case discussed. These concerns will be explored further in subsequent sections of this chapter. The one motivator to action from the literature which was not directly evident in any of the cases in this study was political and societal demand for educational reform. This topic was discussed by the respondents as a concern but was not identified as a direct motivator to action by any of them.

Bridges (1992) suggested that during the salvage phase of the administrative response the administrator will move to unmuted criticism and away from the ceremonial congratulations, double-talk, and inflated ratings of the direct toleration phase. He indicated that the expected outcome will be a defensive reaction on the part of the teacher. This reaction in this study was represented by a refusal to recognize the need for

change in all cases discussed by the respondents. In four cases the teachers adopted a belligerent, defensive, or noncooperative attitude, which further complicated the issue for the respondents. The adoption of these attitudes was also identified by Phillips' (1994) and French's (1994) respondents.

Phillips (1994) touched on the impact that living and working in small communities has on the process. He quoted one of his respondents describing how the decision to terminate her contract affected her family ". . . being in a small community. My parent and my relatives live in this community. The shame—you don't want to tell them. I did tell them; I was very open with them. They have to deal with it too" (pp. 87-88). Unfortunately, Phillips did not pursue this line of inquiry to determine whether his administrator respondents had similar experiences, but the brief comment by the teacher supports the experiences related by my respondents.

Personal and professional relationships between teachers and administrators are likely to be closer on small staffs, and even more so in small communities. This creates an even greater dissonance between the principal's various roles as supervisor, colleague, friend, parent, and community member. The constant interaction with the community that is integral to living in a small community extenuates the pressures on the principal to act, but the internal school relationships on a small staff may represent a pull in the opposite direction. I contend, and I believe that the respondents would agree, that dealing with an incompetent or marginal teacher in a small school in a small community is the most difficult task that a principal will ever face.

Phillips (1994) alluded to the problems associated with long-term relationships between the supervisor and the teacher: "The strength of the

emotional response was greater for supervisors who worked closely with the person. Thus, principals and superintendents of small jurisdictions tended to feel more stress than did central office supervisors whose role involved less direct contact" (p. 130). The respondents in my study found this to be true and, in fact, found that the length of relationship between the two people involved was an added stressor.

Confronting the Problem

One subsidiary question guiding this research was: **How do school principals achieve the voluntary termination of the tenured marginal or incompetent teacher?** Fuhr (1990) identified one possible answer to this question when he suggested that when salvage attempts have failed, it is time for the principal to talk to the teacher and suggest that he/she look at career alternatives. I found that in 5 of the 10 cases discussed by the respondents this was, with some variations unique to each case, the procedure that they followed.

Ken and Ernie used the existence of a newly passed early-retirement incentive policy to broach the subject of early retirement, and early retirement was an option offered by central office personnel to the teacher in Ernie's second case. Ken, in his second case, and Frank did not have the luxury of an early-retirement policy to use to broach the subject and so chose alternate means. Ken simply began talking about the desirability of retirement and pointing out that the teacher had already earner her pension and that maybe it was time to consider taking advantage of the pension available. Frank had neither an early-retirement policy nor the existence of full pension to use to entice his teacher into considering resignation and was forced to be more creative. He was able to use the particular skills of the

teacher to encourage him to think about career alternatives in private practice. In each of these cases the teacher's age made retirement a viable option. The respondents' actions in broaching the subject of early retirement were clearly supported by Fuhr (1990).

Bridges (1992) suggested that one of the techniques that can be used to achieve an induced exit is the application of pressure, both direct and indirect, including the use of the power of gentle persuasion, sharing the problem with the teacher and pressing for action, increasing the flow of negative communications, using threats and intimidation, giving unsatisfactory evaluations, and placing the teacher on formal remediation. The respondents in the study used one or more of these techniques, usually in combination, during the decision process to try to achieve the voluntary termination of the teacher.

Ken appears to have been especially adept at the use of gentle persuasion. In the first case he used a continual revisiting of the early-retirement policy and a series of surveys to elicit staff interest in early retirement continually to keep the issue before the teacher. In his second case he continually talked about the problems that the teacher was having and the fact that she had enough service for full retirement, and continued to paint retirement as a viable and desirable means of leaving the profession with dignity.

Frank, Ernie, and Tom used the more direct approach of sharing the problem with the teacher and pressing for action, a technique also used by Ken to supplement the power of gentle persuasion in his second case.

Unsatisfactory evaluations were used in 6 of the 10 cases to bring the issue to the attention of the teacher. These evaluations were followed by formal remediation plans in five cases; in the sixth case the teacher went

on long-term medical leave before a remediation plan could be implemented. Any increasing flow of negative communications appears to be more an outcome of this process than a separate technique, as suggested by Bridges (1992).

Craig's case most clearly demonstrates the full use of all of these techniques in combination. This is most likely a result of its being a five-year-long process that eventually involved the ATA and central office. The formal reprimand issued by the superintendent could be construed as the use of threats and intimidation, but it is not clearly such because of its place in the process.

Only in Ernie's second case was the use of threats and intimidation clearly evident. The community petition and subsequent central office involvement to try to force the teacher to transfer, resign, or take a sabbatical clearly fits this descriptor. Significantly, this was also the only case discussed where the objective of having the teacher removed from the system was not achieved. The clear message contained in this case is that threats and intimidation should be used as a last resort, because they appear to be the least likely to succeed and may, as they did in this case, create staff morale problems and a backlash against the person or persons seen as being responsible.

It appears from Ernie's experiences that school-based administration may be more successful in inducing the acceptance of an early-retirement package than central administration is. This may be because the principal is viewed as less threatening than central office or that school administrators are willing to be more patient with the process and work at allowing the person involved eventually to reach the decision for him/herself. Central

office involvement also seems to create defensive reactions on the part of the teacher and the rest of the staff.

The respondents indicated that during the process there was a time when the possibility of early retirement/resignation became a real possibility and that at this time they needed to determine what it would take to achieve this result. Their actions to adjust policy, to offer financial incentives, and to open up other career alternatives through contract work are clearly supported in the literature. Kelleher (1985) stated that the school system should "offer financial incentives . . . to help the incompetent teacher through the transition period" (p. 364). Offering inducements to resign/retire and entering into negotiations to achieve this end were supported by Bridges (1992).

Kelleher (1985) further suggested that school jurisdictions could "offer career counselling to help [the] individual clarify his or her job alternatives" (p. 364). Formal offers of career counselling were not used by any of the respondents, but Frank's support for his teacher doing private-contract student assessments at the school and Ken's presentation of full retirement in his second case as a viable and desirable alternative to continuing to teach represent informal career counselling.

The respondents were able to identify outside influences that existed which assisted them in their attempt to move the teacher toward retirement/resignation. In two cases the teacher involved had a partially established business that could be developed into an alternative career. In the third instance the teacher was ultimately influenced by the dual factors of availability of full pension, her husband's health problem, and his impending retirement. Little existed in the literature on the effect of outside influences on the employee's decision to resign/retire; however, these fit

with Kelleher's (1985) suggestion that career counselling be offered and the current business trend toward supplying out-placement counselling.

In the remaining five cases the teachers' ages did not make the early-retirement/resignation option a valid one, and the principals were forced to pursue alternate means to achieve their ends.

Responses by the Teacher

The use by teachers of medical leave and extended medical leave during periods of intensive supervision was well documented in the literature. Most recently, French (1994) and Phillips (1994) both found that their respondents identified this as one of the most common means used by teachers to disrupt and delay the supervisory process. These findings were supported by two of my respondents, who cited specific instances of the use of medical leave.

Effects of the Conflict

Phillips (1994) stated that the effects of stress "seem to be most pronounced for the supervisor most closely associated with the unsatisfactory performer" (pp. 20-21). Phillips later specified the emotions experienced by his respondents as "frustration, remorse and concern for the teacher, anxiety, self-doubt, and finally, relief" (p. 125). French (1994) echoed these findings. My respondents exhibited many of the same emotions, although I have used slightly different categorizations and titles. I also believe that the concern expressed for the teachers by my respondents was significant enough to warrant a separate category.

Johns (1988) identified two basic forms of stress: frustration and intrapersonal conflict. Johns' contention that frustration is caused by

attempts to deal with the incompetent or marginal teacher because the process is marked by delays and failure to remove the teacher was supported by my respondents, all of whom reported that they found the process stressful. The strongest indication of this came from Craig, who spent five years trying, first, to improve the teacher's performance, and when that failed, to seek his removal. The long time period leads to increased stress, according to Johns, and this was certainly borne out by Craig's experience.

The second cause of stress identified by Johns (1988), intrapersonal conflict, results from the conflict between the positive and negative effects of removing the teacher. My respondents supported Johns' statement in that they expressed the desire to remove the teacher because of their concern for the students, but at the same time they expressed concern for the welfare of the teacher. These conflicting desires and concerns create stress. In at least one case, Ernie's second, this stress was aggravated by the support that the teacher received from his colleagues. Frank discussed the fact that other staff would rally behind a teacher whose career was threatened even if they did not necessarily respect him as a teacher. This reaction was also identified by Johns as a cause of intrapersonal conflict and hence a stressor. The stressful nature of dealing with a teacher in difficulty and/or recommending termination was identified by Jankovic (1983), Ratsoy and Friesen (1985), Bridges (1992), French (1994), and Phillips (1994).

The respondents also indicated that they experienced feelings of anger and guilt during the process. The feelings of anger, guilt, and self-doubt expressed by Craig were echoed by Phillips (1994, p. 127) when he quoted one of his respondents discussing how he second-guessed himself.

This finding is consistent with the findings of Phillips and Older (1977), who also indicated that a fear of confrontation was likely part of the process and is a likely explanation for the avoidance of action until a crisis stage is reached. Bruce (1990) described the process of working with a problem employee as "denial, anger, bargaining, depression and withdrawal, then finally acceptance and active planning" (p. 157). The process described by Ken in dealing with his first case supports Bruce's description of the process, and the experiences of other respondents appear to fit most of Bruce's categories, with the possible exception of depression and withdrawal. The absence of this stage may be a result of the respondents' self-editing of their stories or researcher misinterpretation, or they may not have experienced this stage.

Phillips (1994) concluded that "supervisors need support from colleagues when working with teachers whose performance is perceived to be unsatisfactory" (p. 24). The absence of this support was a major issue with my respondents.

The respondents from three of the four jurisdictions in this study expressed dissatisfaction with the role of their central office in the process. The sources of dissatisfaction included inadequate previous documentation, the transfer of teachers with a history of marginal or incompetent teaching to their school and the expectation that the principals would do something to 'fix' the problem, and feelings that they received inadequate technical and emotional support. These findings were echoed by French (1994) but seldom appear elsewhere in the literature. I believe that this finding by French and in the current study is a direct result of the use of interview methodology with practicing school principals by researchers not connected, or not seen to be connected, to the educational hierarchy. Some of French's

respondents indicated that support from central office had improved and cited examples of individuals who provided valuable assistance. It is important to note that her study involved principals working in a large urban jurisdiction with an extensive administrative bureaucracy; the principals in the current study worked in rural or small urban jurisdictions where central office personnel were usually limited to two or three positions. Obviously, the range of support services available differs greatly; the recent slashing of centralized administrative positions is likely to make the experiences of my respondents closer to the norm than those of French.

Phillips (1994) found that "there was relatively little involvement of the A.T.A. staff officers in support of teachers who were pressured to resign" (p. 65). However, my respondents identified the role of the ATA in any attempt to dismiss a teacher as a major impediment to the process. A respondent in French's (1994) study expressed similar feelings: "The whole process, as far as I'm concerned, is far too long. The part that still hurts me the worst is kids" (p. 35). French (pp. 49-51) documented the feelings of frustration, betrayal, bitterness, and abandonment felt by her respondents in regard to the ATA. She summarized her findings as follows:

> They viewed the ATA primarily to be running at cross purposes to their needs at this time. The question of 'Why do we belong if we in our administrative role are not supported by our professional association?' haunted the interviews. (p. 51)

French could well have been speaking of my respondents.

Phillips' (1994) findings and those of French (1994) and the current study appear to be directly contradictory. Phillips may, however, have identified the resolution to this apparent contradiction. He concluded that "where A.T.A. staff officers were not involved, the decision appeared to be made through negotiations and/or counseling between the supervisor and

the teacher" (p. 66). The questions that must be asked are, Did the negotiations between the teacher and the supervisor preclude the necessity for ATA intervention? Or did the supervisor enter into negotiations to preclude the involvement of the ATA? It seems clear from my respondents' comments that they entered into a process of negotiation and counselling out of fear of ATA involvement, not necessarily because they saw this as the best process. Phillips appears to have supported this conclusion (pp. 120-121) when his respondents expressed fears about being able to win their case before a Board of Reference. It also appears clear that the fear of the ATA expressed by my respondents and those of French (1994) could well result in continued toleration of the incompetent or marginal performer if negotiation and counselling failed.

Themes

Individual Ethic of Care

An ethic of care or concern for the welfare of the students, teacher, and system permeated the comments of the respondents. The latter two are found consistently in the literature, but a concern for the welfare of students is not!

Concern for students. One must ask why concern for student welfare did not figure prominently in the literature. Is it because it is assumed to exist and is therefore not expressed? Was it not expressed by the respondents in previous studies? Or was it not seen as being important by the researchers?

The answers are unclear, although the latter interpretation finds some support in Phillips' (1994) study, where respondents' concerns such as "I knew she was bad for kids" (p. 126) or "what's happening with the kids is

wrong" (p. 129) were included under the heading of *Emotional Impact on the Supervisors.* Phillips conceded that his respondents faced "ethical concerns about the need to protect the welfare of students" (p. 136) but fails to pursue the issue except in the context of the organizational perspective.

French's (1994) respondents clearly showed concern for the welfare of students as a priority in their professional lives. Although French did not specifically identify concern for students as a data category or theme, her reporting of her respondents' comments leaves no doubt as to the importance that they place on this issue.

I believe that failing to report concern for student welfare or reporting it in the context of a commitment to public education, as a recognition of the importance of modeling, or as a demonstration of the ethic of care in relation to treatment of the teacher does an injustice to the people that we as educators must serve—the students.

The primary research question guiding this research was, **What are the experiences that motivate school principals to act to seek the voluntary termination of the tenured marginal or incompetent teacher?** It is clear from the respondents' stories that their motivation to act was twofold: concern for the welfare of students and complaints from parents and, to a lesser extent, students.

In every case discussed by the respondents there was a concern about the educational and personal welfare of the students. The educational concerns ranged from a lack of classroom-management skills on the part of the teacher to inadequacies in the planning, presentation, and assessment of the educational program. These concerns were amplified in some cases with concern for the physical safety and emotional well-being of the students

which caused the respondents to question the moral and ethical standards of the teacher. The respondents were pressured to act on these concerns by complaints from parents, expression of community concern about the competency of the teacher, and, especially in the high schools, by student complaints or actions which clearly indicated that there was a problem. Although the respondents were pressured into action by complaints, it appears clear to me that in no case did they act simply because of complaints, but rather in each case the complaints served to focus and further define existing concerns. I firmly believe that the respondents' primary motivation to act was based on concern for student welfare. The respondents' actions were, however, also influenced by a counterbalancing concern for the welfare of the teacher.

Concern for the teacher. Phillips (1994) identified concern for the teacher as one of the emotional responses experienced by his respondents. The respondents in this study demonstrated such a clear concern for the teacher that it stands as a dominant subtheme, second only to the respondents' concern for students. This concern was expressed variously as a concern for their personal and professional standing in the school and the community, concern for the individual, and concern for the individual's financial welfare.

In expressing this concern, the respondents were consistent with Beck's (1991) goals of caring. Beck discussed, among others, the goals of caring as being responsive to the needs of others, expressing concern about the welfare of others, and the importance of a sense of community, all of which are consistent with my findings. Phillips (1994) identified the emotional conflict experienced by supervisors when they had to "resolve the

dilemma between concern for the teacher and concern for the educational welfare of the students" (p. 174).

Phillips (1994) in his discussion of organizational culture summarized the literature on the ethic of care and concluded that it was "a relationship between two people, and also a respect for the dignity and well-being of the person" (p. 37). The stories of my respondents appear to support Phillips' conclusion; however, I have intentionally not used the term *ethic of care* because the study of the organizational cultures in which my respondents worked is beyond the scope of this study.

Accretion of Events

Kelleher (1985) defined the *incompetent teacher* as one "who has demonstrated his or her inability to meet minimum standards of performance over a number of years" (p. 362), and Bridges (1992) concluded that "incompetency ordinarily manifests itself in a pattern of recurring instances" (p. 5). The conclusions of Kelleher and Bridges have been supported by the finding in this study that it was an accretion of events over time that led to the final decision on the part of the respondents that action must be taken. The cases discussed by Phillips (1994) and French (1994) also highlight the fact that it is an accretion of events over time that leads to administrative action.

The Importance of Being Principled

The respondents were clear in their desire to achieve a resolution of the situation that would best serve the interests of the teacher, the students, the system, and the community. Although not specifically described as such, this desire appears to support the principle of benefit

maximization discussed by Strike, Haller, and Soltis (1988), which requires the administrator to make choices which would provide maximum benefit to the greatest number; in other words, they must decide to pursue the course of action which most clearly benefits the students. The respondents' commitment to protecting the best interests of the students has previously been clearly reported in the theme *Individual Ethic of Care.* By forcing the administrator to make choices about the greatest good, the principle of benefit maximization creates the intrapersonal stress previously discussed in the data category *Effects of the Conflict.*

The Difficulty of the Principal's Role

It seems clear that principals would like to be able to say, as Tom did, *"I trust you as a professional. Go out there and do the job, and I'll support you."* The unfortunate reality is that for a small percentage of the teaching force this is not possible. This is readily apparent from the stories of the respondents and is, when the situation arises, the single greatest stressor in a principal's professional life. The frustration evident in the views of these respondents echoes that of the respondents in French's (1994) study and of many other administrators with whom I have spoken during the 16 years that I have been an administrator.

The respondents in this study clearly appear to support Johns' (1988) contention that the process is stressful and that a major component of the stress is a result of frustration caused by a process marked by delays and failure to remove the incompetent teacher. This frustration was magnified for the respondents in this study because of their individual ethic of concern for the well-being of the students in their care, which was often in apparent

conflict with their individual ethic of concern for the welfare of the teacher and for justice.

Conclusions

When Bridges (1986) asked superintendents, principals, and personnel directors why so few teachers were dismissed for incompetency, they identified three main problems:

> (1) the legal barriers to removing tenured teachers for incompetence;
> (2) the technical problems in measuring teacher effectiveness; and
> (3) the human obstacles that were involved, including the willingness and the ability of supervisors to carry out their responsibilities in the area of teacher evaluation. (p. 62)

The respondents in this study likely faced the same problems as those identified by Bridges' respondents, yet their results were very different. Why? My respondents agreed that the legal barriers and the involvement of the ATA made formal dismissal impossible or at best a problematic exercise in which they were not willing to engage. They chose to skirt this problem by not pursuing formal dismissal, choosing instead to counsel, cajole, and/or threaten until they had achieved a voluntary retirement or resignation. The respondents may have experienced difficulty measuring teacher effectiveness in a manner that would have withstood judicial review through a Board of Reference, but were quite capable of determining when the teacher was failing to meet expected standards of teaching proficiency and personal and professional conduct. Most important of all, the respondents in this study demonstrated a willingness and the ability to engage in teacher evaluation and pursue the removal of incompetent or marginal teachers from their schools and systems.

The principals in this study shared a deep and genuine concern for the welfare of their students—a concern so strong that it gave them the strength necessary to act despite the structural and legal obstacles placed in their paths and to handle the frustrations and stresses inherent in the process. They demonstrated the will to act, as should all of us if we are to succeed in our first duty of ensuring that children are safe, secure, and receiving a quality education.

Recommendations/Implications

1. A quantitative study should be undertaken to assess the level of dissatisfaction among administrators with the role or perceived role that the ATA plays in the process of dismissing the marginal or incompetent teacher.

2. The ATA should continue and possibly expand recent initiatives to provide more and better service to its members who are administrators. The provision of this service must, to be effective, include inservice for administrators that will convince them that they are being well represented and served by their professional association.

3. Jurisdictions must investigate means to promote transfers of teachers when it is seen that a new school or new teaching assignment might benefit the teacher and preserve a career. This initiative would have to have built-in safeguards so that it does not promote "the dance of the lemons" (Bridges, 1985, p. 21). These safeguards would also protect the receiving principal from the responsibility of dealing with someone else's problem if the transfer does not result in the teacher being able to provide an acceptable level of service.

4. The respondents identified isolation and emotional stress as significant factors influencing their professional and personal lives while

involved in this process. Jurisdictions need to look at means to reduce the feeling of isolation and provide assistance to principals in handling the emotional stress involved. Jurisdictions without employee assistance plans may want to investigate their availability not only for administrators, but also for the teacher involved.

5. Jurisdictions need to look at making career counselling available to staff experiencing difficulty, possibly combined with policy/programs easing the transition to retirement or alternate careers. Early-retirement incentives that can bridge a financial gap from resignation to receipt of pension should be in place. It is apparent from this study that the two factors which most influence the ability of a principal to counsel, induce, or cajole a teacher to resign or retire are the existence of financial incentives and the possibility, which must be seen by the teacher, of pursuing alternative careers. Jurisdictions should investigate and encourage more flexible working arrangements, including part-time, job-sharing, team-teaching, and other alternatives that might enable staff to continue providing productive service where full-time has proven to be unsuccessful.

6. The value of the formal cyclical evaluation process that has been the standard approach to teacher evaluation in Alberta for the past decade may be called into question by the fact that in none of the cases was the knowledge that there was a problem the result of a formal supervision process. This fact also highlights the importance of 'information at hand,' which is recognized in the new Teacher Growth, Supervision, and Evaluation Policy as a reason for initiating a formal evaluation process with experienced, tenured teachers. It will be essential that the implementation and functioning of the new policy be monitored closely by all stakeholders to determine whether it addresses the need to identify, remediate (likely

with little success, based on the experiences of my respondents), and dismiss marginal and incompetent teachers without destroying the emotional and personal well-being of the principal in the process.

7. It appears from Ernie's experiences that school-based administration may be more successful in inducing the acceptance of an early-retirement package than central administration is. This may be because the principal is viewed as less threatening than central office or that school administration is willing to be more patient with the process and work at allowing the person involved eventually to reach the decision for him/herself. Central office involvement also seems to create defensive reactions on the part of the teacher and the rest of the staff.

It may be advisable for school jurisdictions to provide the moral, emotional, and financial resources necessary to enable principals to pursue the negotiation of a voluntary resignation/retirement within a framework that recognizes and follows appropriate professional and legal practices.

REFERENCES

Alberta Education. (1993). *Toward teacher growth: A study of the impact of Alberta's teacher evaluation policy.* Edmonton, AB: Author.

Alberta Education, (1994). *Guide to education: ECS to Grade 9 handbook.* Edmonton, AB: Author.

Alberta Education. (1998). *Teacher evaluation policy.* Edmonton, AB: Author.

Alberta School Act. (1988). Edmonton, AB: Province of Alberta, Queen's Printer.

Anderson, J. (1991). Dealing with the marginal teacher. In W. F. Foster & F. Peters (Eds.), *Education & law: Strengthening the partnership* (pp. 163-176). Welland, ON: Editions SOLEIL.

Beck, L. G. (1991). *Reclaiming educational administration as a caring profession.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association, Chicago, IL.

Bridges, E. M. (1985). It's time to get tough with turkeys. *Principal, 64*(3), 19-21.

Bridges, E. M. (1986). Collaborative research: The case of the incompetent teacher. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 13*(2), 59-66.

Bridges, E. M. (1992). *The incompetent teacher.* Bristol, PA: Falmer.

Bridges, E. M., & Groves, B. (1984). *Managing the incompetent teacher* (1st ed.). Stanford, CA: Institute for Research on Educational Finance and Governance and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Education Management, University of Oregon, Eugene.

Bridges, E. M., & Groves, B. (1990). *Managing the incompetent teacher* (2nd ed.). Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management and Institute for Research on Educational Finance and Governance, Stanford University.

Brieschke, P. A. (1986). The administrative role in teacher competency. *The Urban Review, 18*(4), 237-251.

Chein, I. (1981). Appendix: An introduction to sampling. In L. H. Kidder (Ed.), *Selltiz, Wrightsman, & Cook's research methods in social relations* (4th ed.). New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

Collins, A. (1990). *Novices, experts, veterans, and wasters: The role of content and pedagogical knowledge in evaluating teaching.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the AERA, Boston.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Part III: Strategies of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 199-219). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Firestone, W. A. (1993). Alternative arguments for generalizing from data as applied to qualitative research. *Educational Researcher, 22*(4), 16-23.

French, L. C. (1994). *Working with teachers-in-crisis.* Unpublished M. Ed. thesis, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB.

Fuhr, D. (1990). Supervising the marginal teacher. *Here's How, 9*(2), 2-6.

Goetz, J. P., & LeCompte, M. D. (1984). *Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research.* Orlando, FL: Academic Press.

Guba, E. G. (1981). Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries. *Educational Communication and Technology Journal, 29*(2), 75-91.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1981). *Effective evaluation.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Hallinger, P. (1983). *Assessing the instructional management behavior of principals.* Unpublished Ed. D. dissertation, School of Education, Stanford University, Stanford, CA.

Herriott, R. E., & Firestone, W. A. (1983). Multisite qualitative policy research: Optimizing description and generalizability. *Educational Researcher, 12*(2), 14-19.

Holsti, O. R. (1969). *Content analysis for the social sciences and humanities.* Don Mills, ON: Addison-Wesley.

Jankovic, M. M. (1983). *Factors associated with school principals' experiences of work-related stress.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB.

Jevne, R. F. J., & Zingle, H. W. (1991). *Striving for health: Living with broken dreams.* Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta.

Johns, G. (1988). *Organizational behavior: Understanding life at work* (2nd ed.). Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.

Kelleher, P. (1985). Inducing incompetent teachers to resign. *Phi Delta Kappan, 66,* 362-364.

Laghi, B. (1994, November 10). Education minister wants teachers' competence tested. *Edmonton Journal,* p. A7.

Latham, G. P., & Wexley, K. N. (1981). *Increasing productivity through performance appraisal.* Reading, MA: Ballinger.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Case study research in education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1984). *Qualitative data analysis.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Owens, R. G. (1982). Methodological rigor in naturalistic inquiry: Some issues and answers. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 18*(2), 1-21.

Patton, M. Q. (1980). *Qualitative evaluation methods.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Patton, M. Q. (1982). *Practical evaluation.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Peterson, K. (1977-78). The principal's tasks. *Administrator's Notebook, 26*(8), 1-4.

Phillips, D. A., & Older, H. J. (1977). A model for counseling troubled supervisors. *Alcohol, Health, and Research World, 2*(1), 24-30.

Phillips, W. (1994). *The forced resignation of teachers.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta.

Ratsoy, E., & Friesen, D. (1985). *Occupational stress among educational personnel in the Edmonton Public School District.* Edmonton, AB: Edmonton Public School Board.

Sproull, L. (1981). Managing educational programs. *Human Organization, 40*(2), 113-122.

Stake, R. E. (1978). The case study method in social inquiry. *Educational Researcher, 7*(2), 5-8.

Stake, R. E. (1994). Case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 236-247). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Steinmetz, L. L. (1985). *Managing the marginal & unsatisfactory performer* (2nd ed.). Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley.

Stoeberl, P., & Schneiderjans, M. (1981). The ineffective subordinate: A management survey. *Personnel Administrator, 26,* 72-76.

Strike, K. A., Haller, E. J., & Soltis, J. F. (1988). *The ethics of school administration.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Townsend, D. (1984). *The first year of implementation of a policy of teacher supervision and evaluation in the five secondary schools of Lethbridge School District No. 51.* Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education.

Townsend, D. (1987). *Teacher supervision and evaluation policies in selected Alberta school jurisdictions 1983-1986.* Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education.

Wilson, S. (1979). Explorations of the usefulness of case study evaluations. *Evaluation Quarterly, 3*(3), 446-459.

Yin, R. K. (1984). *Case study research.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

APPENDIX

CURRICULUM VITAE

EDUCATION

Doctoral studies, University of Alberta, Educational Policy Studies (coursework completed May 1995)

M.Ed., University of Alberta, Educational Administration, 1986

B.Ed., with Distinction, University of Alberta, Secondary Social Studies and Educational Foundations, 1978

B.A., University of Alberta, History and English, 1976

PROFESSIONAL

September 1995 - Present
September 1989 - June 1994
Principal of Harry Balfour School, County of Grande Prairie
ECS-9 with 650 students

September 1987 - June 1989
Principal of Killam Public School, County of Flagstaff
ECS-9 with 240 students

January 1981 - June 1987
Vice-Principal of Hillside Junior-Senior High School, East Smoky School Division
Grades 7-12 with 525 students

September 1987 - December 1980
Social Studies teacher
Hillside Junior-Senior High School, East Smoky School Division

April - June 1978
Social Studies and English teacher
Wainwright Junior-Senior High School, Wainwright School Division

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

1995 - Present:	Site-based budgeting, site-based management, and Finance Committee of Peace Wapiti School Board
1991 - 94:	Member/Facilitator of the County of Grande Prairie Education Strategic Planning Committee

	1989 - 94:	Member of policy committees concerned with French as a Second Language, supervision, counselling services, home schooling, I.O.P. programming, and student evaluation
	1989 - 91:	President of the County of Grande Prairie Administrators' Association
	1989:	Attended a week-long Richard Manatt Performance Evaluation Workshop
	1988:	Attended the Alberta Academy for Educational Leadership
	1988:	Member of the evaluation team for Heisler School
	1986 - 87:	President of the East Smoky School Division Administrators' Council
PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES	1979 - Present:	Council on School Administration
	1978 - 1995:	Social Studies Council Religious, Social, and Moral Education Council Intercultural Education Council
	1988 - 89:	Economic Policy Chairman, Flagstaff Local #18
	1981 - 87:	Alberta Education Item Building and Field Testing
	1981 - 87:	Peace Area Regional Council of School Administrators, Director 1981-83
	1985 - 87:	Social Studies 30 Diploma Examination Marker
	1984:	Cooperating Teacher
	1983:	Mighty Peace Teachers' Convention Vice-President
	1979 - 82:	South Peace Teachers' Convention Vice-President (1980 and 1981) President and Program Chairman (1982)

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Lee, R., Gilchrist, P., & L. Forgie. (1986). *Grade one entrance age study.* Unpublished master's project, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB.

Lee, R., et al. (1988). *Heisler school evaluation.* Unpublished school evaluation, County of Flagstaff.

Lee, R., & Crispin, W. (1994). *School-community team project evaluation.* Unpublished project evaluation, County of Grande Prairie.